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*Drawn by W.T. Benda.*

“HAVE REVERENCE,  
O COMER IN THE NIGHT,  
FOR THE HOUSE OF THE  
DEAD. TURN, TURN AWAY,  
WHILE IT YET IS TIME.”

# STAMBOUL NIGHTS

BY

H. G. DWIGHT

Author of "Constantinople Old and New"



FRONTISPIECE BY  
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TO  
PAUL REVERE REYNOLDS

WHO SPEAKS BITTER WORDS OF THE CHIVALRY OF SCRIBBLERS  
BUT WHO CHIVALROUSLY ENTREATS THEM

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## THE SCRIBE TO A POSSIBLE READER

"Yes," said Sir Thomas, speaking of a fashionable novel, "it certainly does seem strange; but the novelist was right. Such things do happen."

"But my dear sir," I burst out, in the rudest manner, "think what life really is—just think what happens! Why people suddenly swell up, turn dark purple; hang themselves on meat hooks; they are drowned in horse-ponds, run over by butchers' carts, burnt alive and cooked like mutton chops!"

—Logan Pearsall Smith: TRIVIA.

OF THE following stories five have appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, three in *Scribner's Magazine*, and one each in *Appleton's Magazine*, the *English Review*, *Harper's Weekly*, *McClure's Magazine*, and *Putnam's Monthly*. To the courtesy of the editors and publishers of these periodicals I am indebted for permission to tell my tales a second time—although I may add that not one of the tales is told identically as it was the first time. I am also under obligations to Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons for kindly allowing me to use again an illustration and a Turkish seal already published by them. The sketch entitled "Mehmish" has for excellent reasons been despised and rejected of all editors. For no better reason than that it hap-

## THE SCRIBE TO A POSSIBLE READER

pens to be true, however, and because it is in its way characteristic, I keep it in the company of its more fortunate contemporaries.

The teller of the stories has inherited enough Puritanism to believe in the uses of adversity, while reserving judgment on the sweetness thereof, and he raises no outcry against the discouragements through which his somewhat exotic fictions have slowly made their way into print. But he would be less than human if something in him did not warm toward those among the arbiters of destiny who first granted him a hearing. Let him, then, express particular gratitude to Mr. E. L. Burlingame, who accepted for *Scribner's Magazine* the earliest of these stories, "For the Faith"—of which others had earlier reading; to Miss Willa Sibert Cather, who as editor of *McClure's Magazine* puffed up an obscure heart with pride by commissioning Frank Brangwyn to paint a picture for "Mill Valley"; and to Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, who found room in the *Atlantic Monthly* for a thrice-rejected "Leopard of the Sea"—who even found kind words for a scribe unused enough to such sounds to be childishly heartened by them. I cannot help feeling grateful, either, to a publisher so venturesome as to bring out a volume of short stories by an unknown writer. And I wish I might acknowledge the many debts I owe

## THE SCRIBE TO A POSSIBLE READER

in the way of material. No good fairy, alas, dropped the gift of invention into my cradle, and not one of these stories could really be called mine. Several of them I put on paper almost exactly as they were told me. More of them were pieced together out of odd bits of experience and gossip. The seed of one was contained in a paragraph of the *Matin* which I read one morning in Paris. And another may be found, in miniature, in Stendhal's "De l'Amour." To that comprehending Frenchman, unhappily, it was never given to peruse "When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre . . . !"





## STAMBOUL NIGHTS



# STAMBOUL NIGHTS

## THE LEOPARD OF THE SEA

*Power over the waters hath Allah given to the unbeliever, but over the land to the faithful.*

—TURKISH PROVERB.

AFTER it was quite dark, a man who strolled by happened to catch sight of my camera. He stopped and began to examine it. I discreetly lit a cigarette in order to show him that the camera had a proprietor. He continued his inspection, as much as to show me that he had known I was there. Then he took out his tobacco box, rolled a cigarette with deliberation, came up to me, saluted me politely, and lighted his cigarette from mine. It is the custom of the country, you know. Nobody has any matches. I suppose somebody did once, but since then everybody has gone on taking the sacred fire from everybody else.

Having made the second salutation of usage, the stranger showed no haste to be off. Indeed, after standing a moment, he sat down on an-

other stone near me—not so near as the Greek had done. From that, and from his silence, and from a certain easy awkwardness about him, I guessed he was a Turk.

“Do you make postcards?” he asked at last.

“No,” I said, “I am just taking a picture.”

“Ah, you have a whim.”

“Yes,” I assented, “I have a whim.” And I smiled to myself in the dark at the pleasant idiom.

“Why do you take pictures now, when it is dark?” pursued my companion. “There is a very pretty view from here in the daytime, but can your machine see it at night?”

I did not mind his inquisitiveness. There was nothing eager or insistent about it. It was simple and natural, and there was a quality in it that I often feel in the Turks, of being able to take the preliminaries of life for granted. The man was evidently not of the higher classes, but neither was he of the lowest. I could make out that he wore European clothes and no collar.

“I want to get the lights of Ramazan,” I explained to him. “I took one picture at sunset, so as to get the shape of Yeni Jami and the way the Golden Horn lies behind it, and afterward I shall take another on the same plate, for the lights.”

"Ah!" he uttered, as if perfectly comprehending my whim. And after a pause he added: "They must make a great feast at Yeni Jami to-night. They have not lighted one lamp yet."

It was true. The minarets of St. Sophia, the Süleïmanieh, all the other great mosques that ride the crest of Stamboul, already wore their necklaces of gold beads, while mysterious pendants began to twinkle between them. We watched one spark after another spell "O Mohammed!" above the dome of St. Sophia, and a golden flower grew out of the dark between the minarets of Baïezid.

"Do you come from far?" suddenly asked my companion.

"Yes," I said, "from America."

"From America," he repeated. I could see by his tone that the name did not suggest very much to him. "I have been to many countries, but I have not been to America. How many days does it take to go?"

"Eh," I replied, "if you pay very much and go half the way by train you can do it in eight or nine days. If you go all the way by steamer it takes about three weeks."

"Then it is not so far as Yemen," remarked my companion.

"Oh, have you been to Yemen?" I asked in

turn. "I have been to many countries too, but I have never been to Yemen."

"I never would have gone if I had known. But now they go most of the way by train."

"Didn't you like the sea?" I ventured.

"Fire is for the brazier and water is for the cup," returned my companion somewhat enigmatically.

A flicker came out against one of the dark lances of Yeni Jami, and then three small lamps—which were glass cups of oil with a floating wick—dropped into place one above another. Presently three more appeared beside them, and three more, until the lower gallery of the minaret was set off with its triple circlet of light. There was an interval, during which one could imagine a turbaned person picking his way up a corkscrew stair of stone, and the second gallery put on a similar ornament. I was wondering whether the turbaned person would have to climb all the way down to the ground and up into the other minaret, when lights began to flicker there too. But what I really wondered was what my companion meant by his odd proverb.

"Have you been much on the sea?" I asked, hoping to find out.

"Eh, my father was a stoker on the *Leopard of the Sea*, and when I was thirteen or fourteen



I went on board too. The captain took a fancy to me, and when I grew up they made me a lieutenant. But we only went outside once: that time we went to Yemen."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, beginning to be interested in my man and resolving to seize him by the leg if he got up from his stone. "What sort of a ship was the *Leopard of the Sea*?"

"Didn't you ever hear of her?" he asked in surprise. I didn't answer and he went on: "She was not a battleship, if that is what you mean. They called her a cruiser. She was an old steamer they bought in Europe. Sometimes she carried soldiers to the Dardanelles, but most of the time she lay in the Golden Horn."

"How did she happen to go to Yemen?"

The experience of a lengthening career has taught me that information may sometimes be obtained by asking for it, and this time my strategy was successful.

"It was an idea of Sultan Hamid. One night, late late, an aide-de-camp from the Palace came on board with an officer in chains, and said that he was to be taken at once to Yemen. Ten minutes later another aide-de-camp came to say good-bye to the officer, from the Sultan, and to give him his promotion as general, and to make him a present of five hundred pounds. They said he was a Circassian prince and that

he had been plotting. It was a lie. But Sultan Hamid believed it. And how was he to know that you cannot start for Yemen like that, in ten minutes? It was not his trade. It was ours; but none of us was on board, and we had no coal, and no food, and nothing, and the people from the Palace said we must be gone before morning. So sailors came to wake us up—as many of us as they could find—and there was great calamity. And we did start before morning. We got a tug to pull us, and we went around to Küçük Chekmejeh, in the Marmora, and there we stayed till we were ready to start. It took us three or four weeks. The machine was old and broken, and we had to get an Englishman to mend it. And the *Leopard of the Sea* had been lying so long in the harbour that no one could find her bottom. It was all grown with bushes and trees, like a garden. And what mussels grew in the garden! And what *pilaf* they made! We picked off all we could, and we ate them ourselves till we were sick of them, and we sold the rest. The mussels of the *Leopard of the Sea* were famous in Constantinople. Afterward we were sorry we had sold the mussels though. When at last we started for Yemen each one of us had ten loaves of bread and some olives and cheese. We didn't know how long we would be on the way. At the

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end of three days we had only just passed the Dardanelles and the cheese and olives were gone. A day or two later the bread was gone too, though we were still far from Yemen."

"How about water?" I asked.

"Water we had, thanks to God! We had a machine for making the water of the sea sweet. It was only food we didn't have. We had to stop at an island and get some."

"What island was it?" pursued I, in curiosity, wondering how far the *Leopard of the Sea* got on ten loaves of bread a man.

"How should I know? It was an island in the White Sea." By which he meant not our White Sea but the Mediterranean. "I didn't ask the name. Greeks lived on it. The governor of course was a Turk. We were very sorry when we left it. The sea began to show himself after that. Until then we had not known him."

"Were you sick?"

The darkness hid on my face the grin without which this question may not be asked.

"My soul! Who is not sick when the wind blows on the sea—unless he is accustomed? We were not accustomed. How should we be? We had never put our noses outside the Dardanelles. It was worst for the captain and me, because we had to stay on deck and steer

whether we were sick or not. But we got accustomed by and by. And the captain taught me a little about the machine which points its finger at the Great Bear, and about the papers wherein are written all the lands and islands of the earth. And after two or three weeks we found Egypt. It seemed to me a miracle. When I saw it lying white and flat on the edge of the sea and the captain said it was Egypt, I said to myself: How do we know that it is Egypt? It may be Persia. It may be England. But it was Egypt, thanks to God! And if it had not been for the Circassian I don't know what we would have done.

"He was a very good man. The aide-de-camp who brought him from the Palace said that he was to be kept shut up in a small room and that he was to eat nothing but bread and water. But we were all shut up and none of us had anything but bread and water, and not always that. And so the captain very soon let the Circassian do what he liked. And when we got to Egypt the Circassian bought food and coal for us, out of the money the Sultan had given him. For we had none. We had spent all we had at Küchük Chekmegeh and at the island. Then we went on, through the river that goes into the Arabian Sea. We had orders to take the Circassian to Jiddeh; but at Suez

they brought us a telegram telling us to go on without stopping to Hodeïda, and afterward to bring the Circassian back to Jiddeh. At Hodeïda, however, we found another telegram which said that we were to go on to Basra, for some soldiers."

"To Basra!" I exclaimed.

I began to feel hopelessly choked up with questions. I wanted to know more about the Circassian. I wanted to know more about the captain. I wanted to know more about everything. The man whom chance had brought for a moment to a stone beside me had an Odyssey in him, if one could only get at it.

"To Basra, *ya!*" he said before I could stop him. "And a time we had getting to Basra—more than two months. It was so hot we could not sleep at night, and again we had nothing to eat. And worst of all, the machine that made the water of the sea sweet got a hole in it, we used it so much, and after that the water was only partly sweet. And it was so bad we tried to find water on the land, and one night we went too near and sat." By which the mate of the *Leopard of the Sea* meant that they ran aground.

"We sat for two weeks, trying to get away. It was good that the wind did not blow in that time. In the end I don't know whether more



water came into the sea or what happened, but all of a sudden we found that we could move. Then another calamity came on our heads. Although we had been sitting for two weeks we had been burning coal most of the time, trying to get away. So before we got to Basra no coal was left. The Circassian had bought more than we needed to get to Jiddeh or even to Hodeïda, but we never expected to go any farther. So we spent all our time finding wood for the machine. We burned up all the doors, all the chairs, all the tables, all the boats. We cut down walls in the ship, we tore up decks. And then we only just got into the river of Basra.

“At Basra how good it was to put our feet on the earth! And if you knew what a country that is—hot, flat, dirty! They speak Arabic too, which none of us could understand but the Circassian. And thieves! We had already burned up most of the ship, but they would have stolen the rest if we had let them. So although we had come to land we still had no peace. And twelve hundred soldiers were waiting for us and expected to be taken away immediately. They had been in Arabia seven years, poor things, although when they went the government promised that they should stay only three. There had been three thousand of them in the beginning. More than half of them



had died, not from bullets but from the sun of that country and its poisonous air. And not one of them had been paid or had had a new uniform in seven years. You would have wept to see them—how ragged and thin they were, and how they begged us to pay them and take them away.

“How could we take them away or pay them? We had not been paid ourselves for four or five months, and we had no food or water or coal, and nobody would give us any. We went to the governor, we went to the general, we went to everybody; but not a *para* could we get. The Circassian still had a little money, most of which we used in telegraphing to Constantinople. And still no money came. We had to sell our watches, our clothes, anything we had left. One day we even sold two windows—you know the little round windows in the wall of a ship? A fat Arab wanted them for his house. What could we do? We had to live. We couldn’t find any others to take their places and so we nailed kerosene tins over the holes—one inside and one outside. They looked very funny, like blind eyes. They were at the bow, one on each side.”

My companion paused a moment, as if musing over the blind eyes of the *Leopard of the Sea*. Then he rolled himself another cigarette.

I noticed for the first time that the minarets of Yeni Jami were fully alight, and that other lights were beginning to hang in the darkness between them.

"In the end it was the Circassian again who got us away from Basra. He gave the captain the last money he had and told him to telegraph to Sultan Hamid and say five hundred pounds must be sent to us immediately or we would go to Europe and set the Circassian free. How was Sultan Hamid in his palace to know that we had no coal and could not go to Europe if we wanted to? But the next day the governor came to the captain with five hundred pounds and a decoration, which he pinned on his coat with much speech, and invited him not to let the dangerous Circassian go. The dangerous Circassian was there listening with the others, and the governor liked to speak with him more than with any of us, because he was an *effendi* and knew all the people of the Palace. The governor after all, poor man, was no better than an exile himself.

"So at last we started back to Jiddeh, with money in our pockets and bread in the cupboard and coal in the machine. The captain took care to put a lot in the place where the windows had been that he sold, to keep the tin tight against the wall of the ship. We got along very

well that time. We reached Jiddeh in forty-five days. Before we got there the captain told the Circassian that he would not give him to the governor but that he would give another man, one of the soldiers, and say it was the Circassian, and bring the Circassian back to Egypt and let him go. But the Circassian would not allow him. He said it was not just that another man should be punished in his place, and that they would find it out in Constantinople and punish the captain and the governor and there would be many calamities. Even when the captain wept and kissed his feet, the Circassian would not allow him. You see they had lived together for so many months and had suffered so much together that they had become friends. Ah, he was a very good man. Because he was a good man God rewarded him, as you will see."

I did not see at once, however, for my companion stopped again. And when he went on it was not to give me any essential light on the history of the mysterious Circassian.

"I told you about the soldiers we brought from Basra, who had been in Arabia seven years and who had never been paid. They were so glad to leave Basra that they made little noise about their money, and the general promised them that they would get it in Jiddeh. But when they heard the story of the Circassian,

how he telegraphed to Sultan Hamid and got money for us, they said it was a shame that he didn't get money for them too: they had gone seven years without a *para*. And when the general of Jiddeh told them that they would be paid in Constantinople they made much noise. They would not believe that the general had no money, and they brought the Circassian into it again and said he must telegraph to Sultan Hamid. They could not understand! It was only when the general threatened to keep them in Yemen and send the *Leopard of the Sea* home without them that they were quiet.

"We were sorry to leave the Circassian in Jiddeh, but we were glad to start away at last. It is the country of the Prophet, but *vallah!* it is a dirty country! We came quickly enough up to Egypt. The *Leopard of the Sea* walked more slowly than ever, because the hole in the machine for making the water of the sea sweet spoiled the water, and the bad water spoiled the machine of the ship. Still, we went forward all the time. And in Egypt, thanks to God, there was no telegram. And our hearts became light when we came once more into the White Sea, where it seemed cold to us after Yemen.

"The captain said he would stop nowhere till we got to the Dardanelles, lest he should find a telegram. But our calamities were not quite



done. It was because of the soldiers again. After they smelled the air of their country once more and ate bread every day, something came to them. They went to the captain one morning and said, 'We wish to go to Beïrout.' The captain told them he couldn't go to Beïrout. He had orders to go to Constantinople. What did they wish in Beïrout? They merely answered, 'We wish to go to Beïrout.' And in the end they went to Beïrout. What could the captain do? They were a thousand, with guns, and we were forty or fifty; and they were very angry. They said they were fools ever to have left Arabia without their money and they were tired of promises.

"So we went to Beïrout. The soldiers told the captain that he need not mix in their business: they had thought of a thing to do. Only let him wait till they were ready to go. And half of them stayed on the steamer to see that he did not go away and leave them. The other half went on shore and asked where was the governor's palace. Every one was much surprised to see six hundred ragged soldiers going to the governor's palace, and many followed them. When they reached the palace the soldiers asked for the governor. A servant told them that the governor was not there. 'Never mind,' said the soldiers, 'we are six hundred,

and on the ship there are six hundred more, and we will find the governor.' Then they were told to wait a little and the governor would come. And the governor did come. For I suppose he was not pleased that there should be scandal in the city. Also it happened that he had very few soldiers of his own, because there was fighting in the Lebanon.

"He received the six hundred very politely, and gave them coffee and cigarettes, and asked them what he could do for them. And they told him their story, and what they had suffered, and how many of them had died, and that they had never been paid, and they said their hearts were broken and they wished their money. The governor said they were right, and it was hard for a man to go seven years without being paid. Still, he was not their general: how could he pay them? 'You can telegraph to Sultan Hamid,' they said, 'and he will send you the money. We shall wait here till the answer comes.' And they waited, the six hundred of them.

"They made no noise and frightened no one, but they sat there on the floor with their rifles on their knees, and smoked cigarettes with the soldiers of the governor—who pitied them and said they would never drive them away. And by and by the governor came back and said he

had heard from Sultan Hamid, who said it was a sin that his children should be treated in that way, and they should have their money. And then he called a scribe, and they made an account, and the soldiers took the money. It came to eight or nine thousand pounds. And a mistake was made by the scribe, and some soldiers got too little, and the governor gave them what was owed. And the soldiers said they were glad they had not been paid in seven years—to get so much now.

“The captain was not pleased by this work, for it put us back many days and he thought Sultan Hamid might be angry if he got too many telegrams asking for money. However, the captain was pleased and we were all pleased to get away from Beïrout with no more trouble. But of course the soldiers were the most pleased, who smelled their own country again after seven years, and who had their money at last. They sat on the deck all day counting it, and singing, and some had pipes which they played, and those who were Laz or Kürds or Albanians danced the dances of their country. But before long the sea began to dance, and then they stopped. And by and by the wind blew so hard they could not stay on deck. We did not mind, because we were accustomed; and the wind was from the south, which helped us.

But they were not accustomed, and they were very sick. The ship was so small and they were so many that downstairs there was no room to turn without stepping on a sick soldier. And water poured down from above, and they all got soaked as they lay on the floor. Even if we had not burned up all the sofas and tables and chairs in the sea of Basra there never would have been beds enough for them. And at last there came a night when the captain and I began to think. The ship went this side, the ship went the other side, waves rolled back and forth in the cabin, everywhere there were cracks and macks till we thought the *Leopard of the Sea* would crack in two. By God, it was a night of much fear. But what is there more than *kîsmet*? It was our *kîsmet* that that also should pass."

I saw it was time to open the shutter of my camera, for the lights between the minarets of Yeni Jami had grouped themselves into the image of a ship. It seemed an odd coincidence. When I sat down again on my stone, after pinching the bulb, the mate of the *Leopard of the Sea* continued to stare abstractedly at the little bark of gold sailing in the dark sky.

"Who shall escape his destiny?" he uttered at length. "For six months we had had no peace. We had lacked bread. We had suffered



storms. We had sat on the floor of the sea. We had been burned and frozen. We had been robbed. We had been worse off than beggars. We had been unjustly treated. We had eaten all manner of dung. But no harm had come to us, thanks to God! And the morning after that night was like a morning of paradise. The sun was bright and warm. The sea was blue blue. There was no wind. There were hardly any waves, for we were among the islands again. We could see on them the flowers of almond trees and peach trees. The soldiers said they heard the birds. They had forgotten all their calamities, the soldiers, and were sitting on the deck again, counting their gold, singing, playing pipes, dancing. And in front of us we could see the mountains of the Dardanelles."

He sighed, telling the beads of the string he carried as he went over the memory in his mind.

"There was only one thing: the *Leopard of the Sea* sat very low in the water. Why not, after the rivers that came in the night before? I thought nothing of it. We pumped, but we didn't mind, because we were so near home. I saw, though, that the captain was thinking. I asked him if he was afraid they would make trouble for us about the telegrams and the money. Sultan Hamid often did things for

reasons that were not apparent, and he never forgot.

“‘God love you!’ said the captain. ‘I think nothing of that. But do you remember those windows we sold in Basra? Those are what make me think. We needed bread then, it is true, and no one can blame us. Also we nailed the tin on very tightly. But in the storm I kept thinking of them. And you see the bow now is lower than the stern. Those blind eyes are under water.’

“‘They will still see the way to Stamboul,’ I told him. ‘There is plenty of coal behind the tin.’

“‘Yes,’ he said, ‘but coal is like rice. It drinks up water, more and more, without your knowing it.’

“‘Eh, if we have a *pilaf* of coal in the ship, what matter?’ I said.

“He laughed.

“‘I would not mind so much, if we had not burned the boats. Just look downstairs and see if there is much water about.’

“I looked, and I couldn’t find any to speak of. I went down to the engine room, without telling them why I came, and there was very little. What they were thinking of down there was the machine. It had become more and more rotten, from the bad water, till it would hardly work.

The door of our house was open in front of us, but when we would have run to it like boys, the *Leopard of the Sea* could only walk, slowly slowly, like an old man."

He had left out enormously, and I realized in the end that I had small notion what manner of man he was himself. But I am bound to say that he did make vivid, as we squatted there on our neighbourly stones, the final case of the *Leopard of the Sea*.

"Why should I make much speech? The old man never found the door of his house. It was because of his blind eyes. But until the last moment we hoped we might get to the Dardanelles. The sea became more and more quiet. It was more beautiful than anything I have ever seen, like blue jewels with light shining through them. A great purple island stood not far away, and white houses were on it. And sails played like children on the blue of the sea. It was so beautiful and so still that the soldiers were not frightened. They noticed that the ship settled in the water, but the captain told them it was nothing. He asked me what we should do—whether we should let off steam to keep the machine from bursting. We finally decided not to. We might reach land after all, and steamers and ships were all about us. While if we let off steam and signalled for help,

there would be much confusion and the soldiers might make another calamity; for they were very simple. 'Akh! if they only hadn't made us go to Beïrout!' the captain said. 'We would have been at home by this time.' But we were very sorry for them."

He stopped again for a moment. Yet I knew in my perverted literary heart that it was wholly without melodramatic intent.

"The sun set. Night came—a warm night of stars. I remember how they looked, and how the soldiers sang on the deck, and then how the *Leopard of the Sea* suddenly began to run—but down, pitching forward."

I wondered many things, but chiefly if he would say anything more. It seemed indecent to ask him—with that picture in my eyes of a lighted steamer suddenly lurching, bow foremost, out of sight. Presently he did say something, though not just what I hoped. First, however, he leaned over and patted the ground.

"The earth!" he said. "The earth! I like to feel that under my feet!"

Then he got up, made me a courteous salaam, and left me on my stone to stare at the little ship of light hanging over the dark mosque.

## MORTMAIN

### I

THE building of the chapel on the Hill of the Arrow Makers was for Mr. Bisbee, the Reverend Horatio Bisbee, who had that matter in charge, an abounding means of grace. At the time, to be sure, he thought it the very devil—although he was not the man to say so. But in after years the structure stood for him as a monument to many things that might have remained sealed to him had he stayed happily at home in Iowa. And it even became his to arrive at the somewhat rare realization that it is well for a man to be able to say of himself: “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio. . . .”

The first of them was the Pasha to whom the ground belonged. He lived in a tumbledown *konak* with nothing but divine providence and three thin props to keep him from sliding into the street, and he ought to have been delighted to get rid of such a draughty rambling old fire-trap for nothing. Whereas he pretended that



he loved every unpainted board on the place, where his fathers had lived ever since the Conquest and where his sons should have lived after him, if— That *if* was the measure of his unreasonableness. For he also pretended that everything had been spoiled for him by these uncircumcised barbarians who had come and planted their infernal printing presses at his ear. How could you take a nap between meals, how could you sip a coffee in peace, how could you look after your rose-bushes—*janîm!*—when your light was darkened by a vast pest-house in which the Christians were already tasting their portion of the world to come, and which resounded from noon to noon as with the torments of the damned? And then they said they merely wished to do good! Let them therefore pay the Pasha's price.

They did, with much grumbling, being more anxious for his *konak* than his company. Only it was many days before Mr. Bisbee, being fresh from his native land, learned that a Pasha's price is not necessarily the one he proposes to you, or that when a Pasha says yes he expresses a courteous desire of not injuring your feelings, rather than any intention of keeping his word. And according to the lights of Iowa it was somewhat difficult to make out what numberless cups of coffee—Mr. Bisbee

thought them very nasty at first, too—and endless disquisitions on the culture of roses had to do with a matter of real estate.

Then the Pasha had a pet cheetah that somebody had brought him from Persia, and whenever you went into the place the creature would jump at you as if he meant to tear you limb from limb. He was quite capable of it, too—although he merely wanted to rub against your legs, purring affectionately, like the big cat he was. But as he sometimes knocked you over, and as the purr of a hunting-leopard sounds unpleasantly like a buzz-saw, the Reverend Horatio did not encourage the beast's advances. Which perceiving, the Pasha seldom failed to call in the cheetah at delicate points in the negotiation.

It came in time to an end, as even Oriental negotiations will—only to plunge the unhappy man of God into another, involving yet more harassing delays and more fantastic processes of law. This was the affair of the Arrow Makers. Mr. Bisbee, born in a land where great corporations tremble before small inventors who take thought day and night how to ruin them, made the mistake of thinking that the Arrow Makers, whose prosperity might be supposed to have been affected by the not altogether recent invention of gunpowder, could

safely be ignored—even if they did happen to carry on their occupation in certain black vaults that yawned upon the steps of the street and incidentally held up that edge of the Pasha's garden. But he learned before he was through with them that an ancient and honourable guild enjoys powers of resistance, quite independent of the transitory human inventions which may happen to have assisted at its birth. For the Arrow Makers delicately intimated that the Pasha's title to a large part of his estate rested chiefly on their own complaisance—which might well take on a different colour when it became a question of *gyaours*. It was clear that the Pasha had not owned the earth under his garden, down to the buffalo who holds the world on his back. What, therefore, was to prevent the Arrow Makers, in the natural expansion of trade, from building as many stories as they pleased on their own foundations? So, for the sake of future peace, it became necessary to buy the air over the Arrow Makers' heads, right up to the moon!

When these transactions were at last brought to a close Mr. Bisbee breathed again. Never had his energy so spent itself in vain against forces as invulnerable as the shadow of the minaret that swept daily across his premises. But if his exasperated bewilderment gave him



a new view of the magnitude of the missionary enterprise, it also sharpened his zeal. He thanked God that he was now master on his own ground, and that the cry of the *müezzín* should presently be answered by the sound of Christian bells. He likewise went so far in disloyalty toward his native land as to be secretly thankful that he had neither eight-hour laws nor labour unions to cope with.

But it was not long before he would have taken a walking delegate to his bosom as a brother. For the poor young man, alas, reared as he had been in Calvinistic ideas of bribery and corruption, had yet to acquire the art of adjusting himself to the surveillance of an alien police. And as for his workmen——! To the eye of their unhappy employer they appeared far fitter to destroy the house of God than to build it. Not only were they as unlikely a band of ruffians as ever lay in ambush, but the confusion of Babel reigned amongst them. Mr. Bisbee, painfully picking up what he understood to be the language of the country, discovered that there were apparently as many languages of the country as there were inhabitants. He also discovered that with each language went a different set of habits and prejudices, the most obstinate of which were of a religious nature. This was to the practical

young missionary a ridiculous and intolerable state of affairs. If the benighted creatures must go whoring after strange gods, why could they not do it like sensible beings on the first day of the week, instead of dropping incontinently to their knees at all hours of the day, leaving him short-handed when he most needed them?

The worst of it, though, was a mysterious but inexpugnable tradition that bound down each of them to one kind of work alone. There was to him nothing against nature in setting an Armenian to drive a donkey or a son of Iran to dig. But he began to understand how inalterable were the laws of the Medes and Persians when he attempted that feat. In fact the sole point in which the men were at one was that they were all as deliberate as oxen and as wedded to the ways of their ancestors. Their energetic employer would sometimes snatch a tool from one of them, in order to show how the thing should be done. But they were insensible to the force of example. Such exhibitions were for them merely examples of Western eccentricity—to be gravely applauded, like the struggles of a child with the laws of gravitation, or to be condoned with private tappings of the brow, but not to be emulated. When searched, haltingly, for reasons, they would answer: "It

may be that Americans do so. Let them, and God be with them. As for us, we do *so*." And there was an end of the matter.

There was not altogether an end of the matter, however, for there was always something new. The men were as incalculable as children—they had a way, indeed, of addressing their square-jawed young master, at moments of expostulation, as their mother and their father—and as full of superstitions as a pomegranate of seeds. One day, for instance, after digging had begun, they uncovered in one corner of the grounds a lot of skeletons. Whereupon they all ran gibbering away and everything came at once to a standstill. It was only when a Jew happened along and obligingly offered to remove the bones that the men consented to be appeased.

It was not very clear to Mr. Bisbee what the Jew wanted of a lot of skulls, or how the rude coins that rattled about in each one, and the earthenware lamps beside them, would pay for the trouble of carrying them away. He had read at college, of course, that it was once the fashion to put a coin into the mouth of a dead man, to pay his passage to the other world; but he was less interested in such heathenish customs than in planting the seed of the Word. And how the Word was to be planted by such

unsanctified hands, and in such a soil, was often more than he could see. It was a mystery, for that matter, that the Pasha had ever succeeded in raising so much as a single heathen rose. The whole subsoil of the garden was one mass of rubble, made up of bits of marble, of pottery, of broken glass and crusted metal, all so fine and dry that it would run like sand. And a faint strange odour came up from it, which was very unpleasant to Mr. Bisbee and made him desperately homesick for the sweet tilth of his native State.

It appeared, however, that others did not look upon the matter quite as he did. Which, indeed, became the next source of his troubles. After the Jew had carried away the bones and the coins and the lamps, and even the big tiles forming the curious triangular concavities in which these objects had lain, a Greek turned up who evinced as much curiosity in the proceedings as if they had been any of his business. He was the more perplexing to deal with because he was a gentlemanly sort of fellow—he called himself a member of the Hellenic Archæological Syllogos, whatever that might be—and knew English very well. The Reverend Horatio had never imagined that a Greek could seem so civilized.

This Greek was particularly interested to

learn the nature of the building to be erected—Mr. Bisbee was a little at a loss to answer his question as to its architecture—for he said that the place had once been the site of a Byzantine monastery, and before that of a pagan temple—to Aphrodite. He also explained the nature of the soil, as being due not only to the natural effect of time but to the fact that the city had been so often sacked—by the Persians in the fifth century before Christ, by Septimius Severus in the second century after, by the Venetians and Franks of the fourth crusade, and by the Turks in 1453. He nevertheless declared himself as certain that priceless relics of antiquity still remained to be discovered—witness the pre-Christian necropolis that had lain undisturbed at a higher level than centuries of subsequent building and rebuilding. Although of the treasures for which the emperors had ransacked Italy and Greece so many had been carried away or destroyed, a great many must have been overlooked or buried, particularly in 1453. For this reason, and because the opportunity was so unusual—since the government did not permit excavation—he begged that Mr. Bisbee would give away no more archæological finds to the first Jew who happened to ask for them. Every spadeful of the soil of a city whose walls had first been raised by Apollo and



Poseidon, and which had kept alive the Attic torch for the kindling of the Renaissance, was precious—as a citizen of so enlightened a country as the one to which Mr. Bisbee belonged was of course the first to appreciate. And the Syllogos would be only too happy to accept the custody of whatever might be found in the course of digging.

It is the historian's pleasure to record that Mr. Bisbee eventually became sensible, in his degree, to the strange eloquence of antiquity, which may speak to men more loudly than living tongues. But at the time of our tale he was far from agreeing with his learned and somewhat prolix friend as to the value of the soil of Constantinople. It struck him, on the contrary, that soil so utterly valueless he had never seen. And he was less impressed by the antiquity of the town than by the fact that it was an extremely dirty and disagreeable place, inhabited by persons primitive, godless and discouraging to the last degree, whom the Most High in his providence had mysteriously appointed for the trying of happier nations. Why then should he spend his valuable time, already so trespassed upon, in collecting the relics of a heathen past—especially when his business was the building of a house to the confusion of the heathen? So his relations with the repre-

sentative of the Hellenic Archæological Syllagos became a trifle strained.

It is true enough that certain fragments of iridescent glass, certain bits of marble decorated with patterns of grape-vine, certain ancient bricks stamped with the names of emperors, certain battered capitals intricately carved with birds and basket-work, to say nothing of a few odd coins, a little broken pottery, and a miscellaneous collection of limbs in human semblance, passed into the possession of that erudite body. But differences of opinion as to these specimens were not rare. And there was in particular a matter of a marble statue, almost perfectly preserved, with so indecent a lack of raiment that the Reverend Horatio accepted the judgment of heaven when the men managed to smash the thing in trying to haul it out. He accordingly allowed them to break it up for lime, for whose uses they apparently had knowledge of the value of marble. Which became the cause of open rupture between himself and the Greek. When this polite gentleman found what had happened he quite lost his head and said unpardonable things about barbarians to whom the city of Apollo and Poseidon was nothing: even Turks were better, for they at least existed in 1453, and they had some colour of religion for destroying statues.

The honest Bisbee, for his part, was free to admit that Apollo and Poseidon were very little to him. For the rest, having a Christian example to set, he refrained from exposing his own views as to barbarians. But he ordered the Croat at the gate to exclude, thereafter, all persons unconnected with the work.

## II

On the day after this incident, Mr. Bisbee was not surprised to learn that speech was desired of him. He thought it probable that the Greek would object to being turned away, and possible that he might have a few apologies to make. So, not without an inward sense of magnanimity, the young man consented to an interview. He accordingly did feel a certain surprise when two persons waited upon him—the sole resemblance of either of whom to the member of the Hellenic Archæological Syllogos was that the elder had been almost equally in evidence from the beginning of the work.

This was an Armenian of some age, rather bent and shabby, who had attracted Mr. Bisbee's attention by reason of the excessive leisure he seemed to enjoy and the excessive politeness, bordering upon the obsequious, with which he never failed to salute the director of the works. These characteristics, and a cer-



tain furtiveness of eye, had not particularly commended him to that straightforward gentleman, who sometimes found time to wonder why a man apparently in need of work didn't go out and hunt for it instead of watching a lot of lazy lummocks dig a hole in the ground. So the missionary felt small pleasure in the honour now done him. And, although the man had interfered with his operations as little as a silent spectator could, he made up his mind to deny any request for the lifting of the embargo.

The Armenian did not, however, make any such request. He merely introduced his son, a small dark youth with a flat head and a quantity of black fuzz about his face, and the two proceeded to inform themselves with great minuteness as to the state of Mr. Bisbee's health and that of his entire acquaintance. The missionary, who abominated roundabout ways, was not mollified by this courtesy. It came to him, as he recollected how many of his valuable minutes had been wasted in one way and another, that to love one's neighbour as one's self was more of an affair in Constantinople than it used to be in Iowa. And while there was little to choose between his present neighbours—whose mutual rivalries and pretensions often amused him, since they were all poor heathen

together—it likewise came to him that his Armenian neighbour was perhaps the hardest of all to love. This should not have been the case with regard to a people supposed to have special claims upon a lover of liberty—apart from the fact that among the heterogeneous driftwood of the empire they furnished the timber most apt for conversion. But there was something about these two—about their eyes, about their strong Semitic noses, about the very way in which they sat on the edges of their chairs with hands folded and feet tucked under the rounds—something unctuous and exotic and incurably Oriental, that aroused in their host, in spite of himself, that race feeling which slumbers so near the surface of civilization. Upon such a mood therefore did the younger at last so far approach his point as to throw out, in tolerable enough English:

“Mr. Bisbee”—he pronounced it Muster Busbee, giving full value to the final *e*’s—“my father has something to tell you. He says: will you give him your word?”

“Give him my word?” inquired the missionary, not a little puzzled. “What do you mean?”

“I mean,” answered the youth, “that you will not say what he tells.”

“Why, I will of course keep any confidence you may wish to make,” said Mr. Bisbee rather

stiffly. "But I must ask you," he added, "to be as brief as possible."

Had the young Armenian been able to read his host's state of mind he might have taken more pains to suit his own action to that gentleman's word. As it was, being absorbed by what he had to say, he first gazed steadfastly at Mr. Bisbee for some moments and then uttered with great deliberation:

"Mr. Bisbee, our family is very ancient." After which announcement he paused again before going on to add: "The Turks are now our masters, but we have lived here longer than they. They are here only from 1453. We are here from the time of Leo the Fifth, the Emperor."

If this name touched no responsive chord in the memory of a gentleman who happened to be better acquainted with the rulers of Israel than with those of the Eastern Empire, the date which the young man mentioned, and the air with which he mentioned it, quickened in Mr. Bisbee a dormant irritation. It seemed to him that these people had 1453 on the brain. One would think that nothing had happened since then! Apparently for them, indeed, nothing had. They lived one and all in old, dead, forgotten, exploded things. He could hardly conceal a contempt which suddenly swelled up in him.

"That is very interesting," he said, "but I hardly have time to hear the story of your family this morning."

The youth was unperturbed.

"Mr. Bisbee," he went on, "because we are very old we know many things. We know things about this land you have bought."

The remark was hardly the one to stem Mr. Bisbee's ebbing patience.

"So did a Greek gentleman who spent some days here," he observed with a touch of asperity. "I heard all about it from him."

The youth smiled a little and exchanged a guttural word with his father. Then he said:

"We know more than the Greek."

If this declaration was even less happily conceived than the preceding, its effect was tempered for Mr. Bisbee by the impressiveness with which it was uttered. He scarcely knew whether to be irritated or amused at the air of mystery which his interlocutor chose to maintain.

"Well," he inquired, "what do you know?"

The youth took another of his pauses before answering.

"We know this"—and glancing over his shoulder at the door he went on in a lowered voice: "When you have dug fifteen feet, twenty feet, perhaps twenty-five feet, you will find an

iron door. When you open the iron door you will find steps. When you go down the steps you will find a passage, leading south and west."

Again there was a silence. In it Mr. Bisbee looked from one to the other of his visitors, whose eyes were upon him with an unpleasant fixity of gaze.

"You do seem to know a good deal!" he exclaimed with a smile. "Where did you happen to pick up this interesting information?"

"My father told me," answered the youth ingenuously. "His father told him, and his father told him, and his father told him—back to 1453."

That was enough for the gentleman from Iowa. He rose and pushed away his chair:

"You are very entertaining, young man, but unfortunately I have many calls upon my time. If you will kindly excuse me——"

The two, who remained seated, exchanged a startled look.

"Mr. Bisbee, please!" begged the younger. "I do not speak well. I try to tell you. This passage went underground from a monastery which was once here to the Palace of the Senate. And in it you will find many things. They were put there by the Emperor Constantine, in 1453, to keep them from the Turks. Our an-



cestor helped. The Emperor and the others were killed."

This disconnected speech, uttered more rapidly than the rest, and with a curious excitement about it, puzzled Mr. Bisbee not a little.

"Well, what of that?" he demanded.

The Armenian bent forward:

"We only ask: give us half!"

The fellow was so comical, with his black fuzz and his melodramatic air and his tucked-up legs, that Bisbee burst out laughing.

"Oh, you mean buried treasure? The Arabian Nights, and the Spanish Armadas, and Captain Kidd, and that sort of thing! Well, I don't know what your game is, but I guess I don't go in on it. Good-bye."

And he made for the door. But the older Armenian, whose strange eyes looked stranger than ever, silently reached out and caught him by the coat, while the younger darted in front of him.

"Mr. Bisbee! I beg you!" he cried, clasping his hands before his face. "It is so! We know! For four hundred years we have watched this place, waiting, waiting, the father telling the son, the son telling his son! It has belonged always to the Turks, who did not know. And they have not treated us as the emperors did. They have spit upon us, they have robbed us, they

have massacred us—there is nothing they have not done to us! But we have waited! For four hundred years we have watched and waited! And now at last this place has come again into the hands of Christians—and of the Christians who have been our only friends! So we tell you! You might not find it, but we tell you! And because we tell you, only give us half! Ah, you have no idea! There is gold—gold—gold! There are jewels! There are treasures of the church! There are statues of the Greeks! There are things kings would give their crowns to have, hidden there in the ground, where no one knows. You will be rich—rich! You may go home and be a prince in your own country! But only give a half, a quarter, a tenth, to us who have told you, who have waited four hundred years—that we may breathe again, that we may be revenged upon our enemies, that we may live somewhere on the earth in peace!”

This outburst held the Reverend Horatio a moment in sheer astonishment. Then the absurdity of it, and all the antagonisms which his two visitors called into consciousness, broke down his long-tried patience.

“Go to somebody else with your poppycock!” he cried angrily. “I have other things to do than to listen to such stuff!”



But before he could get away they had him each by a hand, kissing it and mumbling over it as they dragged themselves after him on their knees. It was all he could do to jerk himself loose. And when he finally got through the door the youth called after him in a strangling voice:

“Ah—our inheritance—— You will take all!”

### III

In such ways did the young missionary learn that between the conception and the execution do many mountains lie. Being square of chin and spare of days he was not the man to sit down before them. Neither was he subject to those revulsions which are the bane of the more sensitively organized. But the experience was the more trying for him because he took it so seriously. Where another might have found beguilement in a world other than his own, he could only see a world to be turned from the error of its way. And this in the light of his adventures seemed to consist in bondage to a dark and unregenerate past. The dust of crumbled empires in which he worked, with its faint strange odour, seemed infected with a nameless poison. Somehow it always made him think of the buried statue upon which he had

come. The very memory of its shameless whiteness—so strangely untroubled, yet so strangely troubling—diffused a corruption of the grave; and he thanked God with a homesick heart for the openness and airiness of his native land, and its good clean earth uncrusted by all these old unwholesome things.

Nor was this mood in any wise lightened by the continued presence of the old Armenian. It brought home to the missionary again and again, with an intensity which often drove the good man to his knees, his physical repulsion to the people about him. Although he wondered, however, what argument had availed to soften the heart of the Croat at the gate, he made it a point to ignore the matter. His pride forbade him to yield so far to the promptings of the flesh. And his spiritual victory was the higher for a more impalpable reason. Little as he had been affected by the rubbish of which the two had made such a mystery, the imputation thrown after him by the younger left him in the other's presence an absurd and indefinable embarrassment. The man was outwardly the same as before. He saluted Mr. Bisbee as respectfully as ever. He made no trouble. He said nothing. He merely watched. And now that Bisbee knew why he watched he could feel a contemptuous amusement about it. But, at

the same time, he could not help feeling a vague hostility in the man. He could not help feeling that he, too, was being watched.

And then, one afternoon, a workman's pick clanged on iron.

The sound affected Bisbee more curiously than any sound had ever affected him before. There was no reason why it should have made him start, should have filled him with a rush of unreasoning anger that positively left him trembling. The men were always hitting one thing and another as they worked down through the débris of centuries in search of bedrock. Least of all was there any reason why he should look for the Armenian. Yet so he did, and he found the man's eyes upon him with an expression he never forgot. But the most disconcerting thing of all was that the Armenian immediately turned and hurried from the grounds.

Bisbee was infinitely annoyed with himself. His vexations were evidently getting on his nerves; he hoped they were not affecting his brain as well! He started to go away, when that struck him as being another sign of weakness. It would be better to prove his own idiocy by finding out the trivial cause of it. The indifference of the men showed what a fool he was. The only thing that attracted his eye among

them was the minaret shadow lying long and dark across the excavation.

He happened to notice one of the diggers who was on his knees in the shadow, working at the rubble with his hands. Bisbee strolled idly in that direction. As he did so he saw the man disengage something that looked like a big ring. It clanged over dully against a sort of metal plate to which it seemed to be fastened. The recurrence of the sound brought back all of Bisbee's irritation—which increased when the workman suddenly bent over and kissed the plate, crossing himself as he did so. What possible relation could there be between that ancient bit of metal, buried no one knew since when, and this ignorant digger of ditches? Bisbee felt again all the tangle of nameless things against which he had to contend, and the hateful guidance in living things of hands long dead. He stepped down into the excavation and ordered the man, sharply, to go on with his work. Then he saw what had called forth the superstitious demonstration. It was the outline of a cross, raised in relief upon the surface of the plate. And presently a second cross and a second ring came into view, divided from the others by a fine seam in the metal.

So at last was laid bare a great metal door of two leaves, set horizontally into heavy masonry.

To each leaf was attached a ring, and above each ring was a Greek cross. And as Bisbee stood there among his outlandish tribesmen, his nostrils full of the faint strange odour of the excavation, with the minaret soaring above his eyes, and below them this long-buried gateway that bore the symbol of his own faith, an unaccountable rage possessed him. He knew that he was making a fool of himself, but he suddenly leaned over and pulled at one of the rings with all his strength. He might have wrenched his arm out of its socket, for all the door would give. He let the ring drop. It struck out a clang hollower and louder than before.

"A cistern," remarked one of the men.

Of course! What else should it be, in a town to which emperors had cunningly brought water from afar? Then there were two doors, not one. Moreover—and Bisbee knelt to brush away the dust with his hand—they could not possibly be of iron. Iron would have rusted long ago, while this metal was merely soiled and scarred by the centuries that had lain upon it. It must be bronze. After all——! He rose, more at his ease. But as he did so his eyes met those of the two Armenians. The old man had returned with his son, whom Bisbee had not seen since the day of that ridiculous interview, and both were watching him with something like a



smile. Bisbee could have killed them. And yet, for the life of him, he could not help feeling a vague embarrassment.

"We seem to have found a cistern," he remarked to the younger with a bow.

"I see," replied the youth politely.

"I think we might as well open it before we go on with the rest of the work," continued Bisbee awkwardly, deferring to the two in spite of himself. "What do you say?"

The youth shrugged his shoulders.

"That is for you to decide. It is not ours!"

Bisbee felt himself going red.

"We might as well—and see——"

That operation, however, proved harder than it looked. The men wasted an hour trying to raise the upper leaf by its ring or to pry it open with their crowbars. They finally had to attack the surrounding masonry, in order to wrench the pivots out of the stone in which they were embedded. Even then it was sunset before they effected the beginning of an entrance. One of the men thrust a stone through the opening. Almost instantly there was a dull concussion within.

"There is no water," he said. "They have filled it up. It will save us the trouble!"

Bisbee turned to see how the Armenians would take it. A strange look passed between

them. A moment later they gave him something of it, with something more of an inscrutable smile. This silent passage affected him like the clang of the doors. The sense that it was lost upon the rest deepened a feeling of mystery which he tried in vain to shake off. In some way or other it was as if some portentous issue hung upon the opening of those great bronze gates that were so slow to give up their secret. And as he stood there, waiting, face to face with the two, while the men struggled with the stubborn masonry, the effort of containing himself became almost intolerable.

At last, however, the gates were jacked far enough to one side to reveal a black aperture below them. Out of it a sudden chill came up into the warm twilight, and a sharp gust—sharper than he had known before—of the odour Bisbee knew so well. Then he heard some one say:

“They have not filled it up, either. There are steps.”

#### IV

The solid, the comfortable earth opened under Bisbee's feet into labyrinths as dark and incredible as Avernus. For in the bottom of his patriotic heart he had always felt that the world really began in 1492. To descend, with

two strangers of whom he knew nothing but their fantastic story, a stairway which must already have been buried thirty-nine years when Columbus discovered America, was to enter bodily that dim Saturnine age in whose existence he had never really believed. It was an adventure far more moving than any mere quest for buried treasure.

They waited till the workmen had gone away for the night, and they posted the protesting Croat on guard at the mouth of the hole. Bisbee let the Armenians go first. It was his acknowledgment of his earlier hastiness. The steps were considerably worn, and they were almost obliterated by a fine earth which had somehow sifted through to them. But with the aid of candles—of the kind that you buy like a ball of twine and unroll as you need—and of stout sticks, they afforded sufficient foothold.

The younger Armenian, who led the way, was the first to make a discovery.

“The steps stop,” he said, after they had descended fifteen or twenty feet, “and the passage turns to the right.”

At this the other halted and gave Bisbee a look. If the passage went to the right it also went toward the south! As it happened, however, the youth was mistaken. The steps did

not stop. They merely paused at a small platform from which they dropped at right angles to the first flight into a great space of darkness that opened out below. It made itself felt rather than seen. But a little reconnoitring with sticks confirmed the fact that the left-hand wall turned away from the landing and disappeared. And this discovery gave the expedition a new element of mystery. Bisbee never forgot the impression of it—the impenetrable chasm of darkness with its mortal chill and its strange odour and its hollow resonances, from which the three tapers reclaimed but the pallor of hands and faces and a few dim lines of masonry.

That the discovery was not particularly welcome to the Armenians was evident from the low words they exchanged and the hesitating way in which they felt about with their sticks. Bisbee, therefore, after a last look to the mouth of the hole—where the red of a cigarette glowed and waned in the darkness and an ancient star looked in (for the first time in how long!)—Bisbee took the lead in the second stage of the descent.

It proved far more ticklish than the first. Not only were the steps open on one side to an unknown abyss, but the wall on the other grew slimy to the touch and the fine detritus under-

foot turned to a thin slippery mud. Then the sepulchral reverberations to which their progress gave rise could not but try the nerves. And even the matter-of-fact Bisbee started when, at a touch from the Armenian behind him, he caught sight of a ghostly phantom hovering in the darkness not far away. It took him a full minute of staring, while unwonted sensations played about the roots of his hair, to make out that the thing must be a marble pillar. After that, however, the descent became easier. A pit with pillars in it could not be bottomless.

So at last the three crawled down to a second level—if a floor so muddy and uneven deserved the name. The moisture dripping from the walls had collected into pools that gave out portentous splashes under the groping of the sticks. It took but little of their blind-man's exploring, however, to determine that this was much larger than the platform where they had halted before. Moreover it was enclosed by walls, and through it ran two rows of marble columns. Looming out of the darkness in which their tops were lost, they had an indescribably eerie effect in the deadly cold and silence.

The sense of mystery was to Bisbee so much keener than any other that he wondered a little at his companions. They wandered about, busy



with stick and taper, making strange reflections and rousing strange echoes in the hollow place. And presently the younger bent over with an exclamation to examine some scattered objects at his feet. Then picking up one of them with a laugh he handed it to his father, who in turn showed it to Bisbee. The thing was a skull, dark and glistening from the moisture in which it had lain.

"He was less patient than we!" remarked the old man.

Bisbee suddenly reached out and took the skull into his own hands. Nothing had ever given him so extraordinary a sense of the actuality of the past. The eyes that once peered through those hollow sockets were perhaps the last, before to-night, to look upon this secret place. Whose could they have been? How did he come here? Did he hear the earth fall on the bronze gates that shut him in from the lighted air? Had there reached him any tremor of that greater fall, when, after the fury of siege and sack, the ruins of an empire obliterated his hiding place? With questions such as these, which rise so easily to the surface of imagination but which had never happened to enter the mind of the missionary, there also came a new impression of the ancient things which had possessed so curious a property of

arousing his resentment. The memory of them gave him now a sense of the continuity of life such as could scarcely have come to him in his own land—and of its immense age, and of its immense waste, and of its immense endurance. Never again, he felt, could this city in which he had chosen to live and die seem to him merely dirty and disagreeable. Nor could its people seem to him merely unsympathetic or preposterous. Were there not, after all, reasons why they should be as they were? There came to him then and there, with his first inkling of the reality of other existences, a strange vision of the dead hands that move in men's lives, ordering their ways in spite of them to hidden ends.

When Bisbee at last put down the skull he discovered that he was alone. The other two tapers had disappeared, and there was nothing to break the unearthly stillness of the place. In the deeper darkness that had closed in upon him he could see nothing but the ghost of a pillar. He groped his way to the nearest wall and felt along it with his stick. The stick suddenly gave under his hand. Lowering his candle to reconnoitre he discovered a narrow archway that rose not more than three feet above the ground. He crouched to look in. Far away, and twinkling like stars above his

head, two faint lights pierced the darkness. A moment later he dropped into a brick tunnel, a little higher than his head, that inclined gently upward. And with a sudden trembling of excitement, there came to him certain old words: *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. . . .*

When Bisbee came near enough to his companions to see more than their candles he experienced an indescribable clutch at the heart. They must have found those ancient things that their ancestor, nearly five hundred years ago, had helped to carry down out of the terror of the siege. One of the two was examining a large dim object in front of him, while the other, the younger, was working excitedly with his arm and his stick at one side of the tunnel.

Bisbee stopped. It was not for him to show the eagerness they expected. Then the old man turned and saw him. A strange smile crossed his face. He beckoned, and pointed to the object in front of him. And as Bisbee went nearer he made out in the candle light a torso of marble. Little as he knew of sculpture he could see it bore a wonderful human resemblance. It made him think of the statue he had let his men break up for lime.

“Do you know what this is?” asked the old

man. Bisbee noticed how husky was his voice. "I will tell you. It is the wall of the mosque behind your printing house. Digging for a foundation they discovered this tunnel—quite by accident." He paused a minute, looking from Bisbee to his son, with that extraordinary smile of his. And what he said next was in some intangible way the continuance of his pause: "The statues they broke up to use in building. This is perhaps a Greek god who carries on his shoulders the house of Moham-med!"

But even then Bisbee hardly took it in. What on earth was the man talking about? Then it gradually came to him that he was face to face with an obstruction in the passage. It was a wall which started obliquely from one side of the tunnel, turned a right angle, and disappeared on the other side. After that he made out, in his bewilderment, that the wall was distinctly lighter than the ancient brick of the tunnel, and ruggedly built of stone. Moreover, there was no junction between the two, for the edges of the brickwork were gaping and ragged. The obstruction could therefore be neither the natural end of the passage nor an artificial barrier. It was simply what the old man said—an independent structure which had happened, under ground, to cut into the older one. And

the torso built into the corner told the rest of the story.

It told so much, in the uncanny silence, that Bisbee grew cold. He stood there, staring at the mutilated marble, waiting he knew not for what. The only words he could think of were those in which he had once heard the young man describe what they were to find here, entangled with the ones that had come to him as he entered the tunnel. Then a sudden crack of wood made him start. The youth began beating the wall insensately with his stick.

"Dogs! Devils!" he panted through his teeth. "Jackals of the desert that defile the palaces of kings! There is no God! There is no mercy in the world! How should they have found it? Did they wait four hundred years? Ah—thieves! Thieves! They have taken all—all—— There is no more hope—no hope—— There——"

He crumpled into a senseless heap on the ground.



## MEHMISH

*As a general rule, people, even the wicked, are much more naïve and simple-hearted than we suppose. And we ourselves are, too.*

—Fedor Dostoëvsky: THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV.

CAN you manage to make a place for a man, I wonder? He has already been in our service. He used to be doorkeeper fifteen years ago. When I tell you why he left, and where he has been for the fifteen years, I suppose you will throw up your hands. I can assure you, though, that you'll never find a better man. He is pure Turk, and he's worth sixty of that hulking Croat of yours who is always peeping into his pocket glass. Mehmish may not be so ornamental. I presume he is even slower witted. But within his limits he is absolutely reliable—absolutely. He's as honest as the Bank of England, and when he says he'll do a thing he does it.

We found that out not long after he first came. We took him as a *bekji*—a night watchman—and he did any other dirty work that was going. The chief at that time was Perkin—you remember? He was the one who afterward

married that Philadelphia soap widow. Well, he was fond of farming—that sort of thing. He made quite a garden of his Therapia place. And one day he took it into his head to keep bees. There was a man somewhere on the Bosphorus who had bees to sell, and Mehmish was detailed to transfer them. The people gave him the hive done up in a sack, which he carried over his shoulder. The bees apparently didn't enjoy that mode of travel. At all events they managed to find a hole in the sack, or the corner of the hive worked one; and they cleared the deck of a crowded Bosphorus steamer as neatly as a Maxim gun—of every one, that is, except Mehmish. Do you think he was going to run away for a few warlike bees? Not a bit of it. He had been told to carry that hive to Therapia, and he carried it. You should have seen him afterward, though. There wasn't a square millimetre of his face, neck, or hands those brutes didn't raise a blister on. I don't know how long it was before the man could look out of his eyes. But the most amazing part of it was that he didn't seem too sorry for himself. Anybody else, conceiving that he had had the nerve to stick to the hive instead of pitching it overboard, would have expected to be petted for the rest of his natural life. Not so Mehmish. He merely said: "It was written that that also

should come upon my head." And no one could have been more surprised or grateful than he when we promoted him to be doorkeeper.

I presume there are dozens of men in this town who would have done the same thing. It's that in the Turks that carried them to Vienna four hundred years ago, and it's that that's going to carry them through a good many other things. Perkin called it stupidity. Perhaps he was right; but I must say I have a fancy for that form of stupidity. Perkin himself didn't happen to be stupid in that particular way. The fact that Mehmish did gave me an interest in him. It wasn't only that I like a man to show a salient characteristic. Part of it was simply because Mehmish was a Turk, and because I always had a weakness for what Perkin called low company. He used to be fearfully scandalized because nothing pleased me so much as to put on a fez and some clothes of a local cut I had made, and go knocking about coffee-houses. I saw and heard a good many amusing things, too. But unluckily it doesn't do to go in too much for that sort of thing. Only those painting and scribbling chaps can prowl around in places where they don't belong. The rest of us have our blessed dignity to maintain, or that of our blessed positions. I have an idea, though, that there is more genuineness in the coffee-

house kind of people: at least you find out quicker whether they stand on their own feet or not. We others are generally what we are because our environment props us up. If we were suddenly left to shift for ourselves, without a piastre or a recommendation, I wonder how many of us would keep our noses above water. I'm afraid I wouldn't, at any rate. I was born of respectable parents, I was sent to a respectable school, I proceeded to a respectable college, I entered a respectable career, and have reached a respectable position in it, without lifting a finger or encountering an obstacle. But if I were to be wrecked on a desert island tomorrow I should die in a week, because I am incapable of doing anything with my hands. I therefore have great respect for those who can, and I have an immense curiosity about what goes on inside of them.

I can't say, though, that I ever got much idea of what went on inside of Mehmish. I don't suppose he did himself, for that matter—or if he did, that he knew how to say so. It certainly was hard enough to get anything out of him. Not that his doings were likely to be very extraordinary. But the fillip of life, for me, is in the small permutations and combinations of incident that make up the lives of us all. And I have often picked up a trait of character or a

turn of phrase from a Mehmish that has stood me in good stead with a Pasha. Did you ever realize, however, what an art it is to tell the story of one's day? Women sometimes have it to perfection. We call it gossip, but it is the raw material of literature, and it is better than the glum silences that fill so many habitual tête-à-têtes. The case of Mehmish rather intrigued me, because I never knew how much of his speechlessness was a personal and how much a racial character. But given the excellence of our relations I came to regard his silence as the silence of the East, unasking and unresponsive. It was only by chance, and in deed rather than in word, that anything came out of him. I remember when he went to his "country." It was somewhere up the Black Sea. All that sort of people come from the provinces, you know. They live here without their women, in corners of the buildings where they are employed or herded together in *hans*, without ever really detaching themselves from the places where they were born or becoming a part of this one. Some of them do, of course, but the great mass of them live like strangers in a strange land, speaking their own dialect, wearing their own costume, following their own customs, and going to their country, as they call it, at long intervals—to marry, to take money, to



die. Still, they all go. It is like a disease, and when the fit comes on there is nothing for it but to let them go. Can you wonder? They put a friend in their place and expect you to take them back when they return.

The fit came on Mehmish when he had been here about four years. In the meantime, however, there had arisen a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. When Mehmish requested me to inform the chief that he was going to his country, the chief took it in the wrong spirit—not that it really made any difference to him. Mehmish was no more to him than any other outlandish individual in blue and silver. What he objected to was the principle of Mehmish taking the matter into his own hands. You see he happened to be a chief imbued with a sense of discipline. But I told the story of the bees, and explained the customs of the country, and finally extorted the desired permission. So Mehmish went. After he had gone the man he left in his place told me he had gone to get married. Of course Mehmish would never have mentioned it. Under the circumstances I wondered if he would really come back in six months, as he said he would. While I had perfect faith in his general reliability, I knew that Asia is a little romantic about dates and the precise fulfilment of promises. But he came back on the dot.

"*Vaï*, Mehmish!" I exclaimed when I found him at the door one morning. "Have you come back?"

"Behold!" he answered, making me a low salaam.

I was genuinely glad to see him again, and genuinely curious, as ever, to know what he had been up to.

"Well, what news?"

"Soundness, thanks to God!" he returned, smiling and shrugging his shoulders.

And that would have been the sum of his contribution to my studies of Turkish peasant life, if it had not been for a letter that came long afterward. The letter was brought among others to me. When I handed it to Mehmish he surprised me by asking me to read it to him. He said, apologetically, that it was the first he had had since leaving his country, and that he would not be free for some hours to go out and get it read. I agreed with the more willingness because I had always wondered what passes between the public letter writers you see and the clients who squat beside them. This missive contained none of the flowers of rhetoric or the page-long sentences that distinguish our official correspondence with the Turks. It began by stating that "I, your father, Hassan, write this letter," and it continued with a catalogue of

names of compatriots to whom that gentleman sent salutations. There followed another catalogue of those who sent salutations to Mehmish, and it briefly ended by informing Mehmish that his "family" had died the day after he left. This calamity was not quite of the magnitude you might think, for a family in Turkish is a wife. But I was none the less moved with wonder and distress—at their not having sent news before, at my having come plump on the thing, like that, after the salutations. If I expected a scene, however, Mehmish was not the man to make it.

"God is great," he uttered gravely, to cover my embarrassment.

I made a pretence of examining the bald statement again, in the hope of extracting further particulars, and mumbled something about my lack of success.

"My family was ill when I came away," he gravely volunteered.

"But, Mehmish," I uttered in astonishment, "why did you come away if she was so ill as that? We would have excused you."

"Eh," he returned, "it was the last day I could start to get back here in time. I promised I would come. Also, we needed money. The day I went to my country I was robbed."

"Oh, Mehmish! Of not much, I hope?"

"Of all I had, *Effendim*. They saw me take it out of my girdle when I bought my ticket, and they stole it on the steamer when I was asleep. I didn't know until I had left the steamer. But my parents had already found a girl for me, and in order not to make shame to them we had to sell fields. Now we shall buy them back."

Imagine—the poor chap losing all he had scraped together in who knows how long, then losing his wife as well, and still having to scrape the money together again for her *dot*! I am afraid I might have said or done something very stupid if Mehmish had not left the room, saying:

"It was written that that also should come upon my head."

His final departure was of a piece with the rest of him. One morning when I came to the office he did not rise as he always did and salute me. He remained on his stool, head down, muttering to himself. I caught the word "afraid." The thing was so different from his ordinary manner that it intrigued me. When I got inside I asked another servant what the matter was with Mehmish.

"*Vallah*, I don't know," replied the man. "He has been like that only this morning. He sits and talks to no one but himself."

So when I went out a little later I made a point of speaking to Mehmish:

"Good morning, Mehmish," I said. "What is the matter? Are you ill?"

He got up hastily and salaamed.

"No, *Chelebi*," he answered. "My soul is squeezed."

This was more, in the case of so taciturn a person, than I might have expected.

"May it have passed," I wished him after a pause, and went on.

I had affairs about town that morning and did not return to the office till after lunch. As I did so whom should I meet on the Grande Rue but Mehmish walking between two policemen and handcuffed like a criminal. I was so amazed that I let him pass without a word. There was no one whom I would so little have expected to see in such a plight. As for Mehmish, he raised his arms to his breast—he could not salaam because of the handcuffs—and bowed low. When I came to my wits I hurried after him.

"What is this?" I demanded of the older policeman. "I know this man. Let him go. If you have anything to say, come to our office. I will be surety for him. He has been with us five years, and I would trust him like my brother."

"Then, *Effendim*, you will learn," replied my



philosopher of the brass plaque, "that you may trust no one in this world. For Mehmish has just killed a man."

I laughed.

"Killed a man? Mehmish would not kill a scorpion! Let him go, I say!"

The officer shrugged his shoulders politely.

"I am sorry," he said, "but what can I do? There are witnesses. Ask them."

The absurdity of the thing left me speechless. I looked at Mehmish. Then I noticed for the first time the disorder of his clothes, certain sinister stains on them. Yet I was reassured by the way in which Mehmish looked back at me. It did not prepare me to hear him say:

"It is true. He said I was afraid."

It was true, you know. He had stabbed a man in Kassîm Pasha, the gully down there under the Little Field of the Dead. I don't suppose you ever put your aristocratic feet into it, but I happen to know its coffee-houses flourishing in sweet proximity to an open drain, its subsidiary aroma of mastic, its crazy wooden bridges, its jingling crank pianos, and its gypsies whose get-up is rather like the Latin Quarter except that their jackets aren't cut in at the waist or their trousers at the bottom and that they wear an almost black fez. It was one of

them, the bully of the ravine, whom Mehmish had killed; and for no other reason than that the fellow had called him a coward. He told me about it at the guard-house—as much about it as I could drag out of him. He made no story of it, and no attempt at defence. He hardly knew the man he had killed, whom he had first met in a coffee-house a few days before—who had spoken boastingly of his own strength and bravery and spoken slightly of Mehmish, and whom Mehmish had encountered that morning on his way to the office.

“He said I was afraid,” repeated Mehmish for the hundredth time.

“Of what?” I asked.

“Of him, of his knife.”

“What did you do?”

“I went to the office. It was my hour.”

That was why his soul was squeezed! I suppose he had gone on muttering the man’s words to himself all the morning.

“What happened when you went out at noon?” I pursued.

“I went to look for him.” And I suppose Mehmish would not have uttered another word if I had not demanded:

“Well, what then?”

“I found him in the coffee-house, and I said to him: ‘You said I was afraid. I also have a

knife. Let us see which of us will kill the other.' ”

“What did he do?”

“He laughed, and said that the men of Anatolia were afraid, except of women and boys.”

“And you?”

“Eh, I showed him.”

Mehmish didn't show me, however. He left it there, while I stared at him.

“But is that a thing to do,” I finally demanded—“to give a man a knife for an empty word?”

“He should not have spoken it. He had time. He might have killed me.”

I could quite see it, in the light of Mehmish's simplicity. And I ventured to ask him one more question:

“What did you do afterward?”

“Afterward?” repeated Mehmish, as if searching his memory. “Ah, afterward I heard the *müezzin* in the minaret. So I pulled my knife out of him and went to the mosque to wash and to pray.”

Yes, sir, that's what he did! And he got fifteen years for it. We had a great row over him. In the good old times manslaughter was a venial offence. There were plenty of ways of hushing up unpleasant questions, and even if you did get caught, a capital sentence, under

the tender-hearted Abd-ül-Hamid, was never executed. When people had to be suppressed it was done quietly and without scandal. But this affair was too public to be hushed up. And Mehmish made not the slightest chance for himself. Although we did the best we could for him, who could get around the fact that he had spitted the bully of Kassîm Pasha, in broad daylight, before dozens of witnesses, for no other reason than that the fellow had questioned his courage? At least that was all anybody could get out of him.

He took his sentence as he took everything else. "It was written that that also should come upon my head," he said. He also asked me to keep his place for him! Which is why I am telling you all this. They shut him up in a tower at Sinope, at first, and I used to send him tobacco. Then they changed him and I lost track of him. I thought he must be dead. I used to wonder about him though. I had seen less of blood-letting in those days, and I found it harder to square with the rest of Mehmish. Had he really finished that chap for the reason he gave? Might it not have been some matter of chivalry for him to stick so to his answer? What, working darkly in that Asiatic head of his, could in the last analysis have brought him to that bloody conclusion?

Last night I was walking down from the Taxim when I saw a knot of people blocking the pavement. I stopped to see what was up. I am a child, you know, for staring at what goes on in the street. A *hamal* or peasant of some sort seemed to be having an altercation with a policeman in the midst of the knot. I asked a small boy what it was about. The small boy tapped his forehead with a grin and told me that the *hamal* had been standing in front of the house till the people inside got frightened and sent for the police. The house, as it happened, was one in which I used to live myself. I started to pass on. As I did so the *hamal* pushed his way through the crowd toward me, and made a deep salaam. I salaamed in return, offhand, not anxious to make myself the centre of a new ring. Then the *hamal* said, with a note in his voice that made me stop:

“*Chelebi*, don’t you know me?”

I looked at him. He was ragged, grizzled, thin. There was nothing about him of the stalwart doorman we used to have. But I did know him.

“*Vaï*, Mehmish!” I exclaimed, holding out my hand.

He took it and did not let it go, after the way they have.

“I have been waiting for you,” he said.



That was why he had frightened the people in the house! As for me, I wondered what one could say to a man when the best years of his life had been taken from him, and he returned to find himself forgotten. Through the sudden sense of it all the old curiosity was the first thing that came back to me, and I asked:

“Why did you do it, Mehmish?”

But Mehmish’s fifteen years had not crushed him, for he answered:

“What could I do? He said I was afraid.”

## THE GLASS HOUSE

*It is by folly alone that the world moves, and so it is a respectable thing upon the whole.*

—Joseph Conrad: VICTORY.

### I

I WAS looking for a Legation.

That used to be my principal pastime, you know—hunting Legations. Every now and then they would send out a new Minister from Washington, and the first thing to do was to find him a Legation. He never wanted the one the last man had. And who should be up on Legations but the oldest living American resident? The secretaries, amiable and peripatetic young gentlemen—you know how it is. Even the Dragoman, in those pre-ambassadorial days, was much less of a fixture than his colleagues in the service. Moreover, he was likely to be a native of the country, upon whom a brand new Minister would gaze with questioning eye. The oldest living resident was really the only one who stayed—the oldest living resident and the landlords. What a crew they were! I naturally came in time to know them like brothers.

Of course they conceived that the good old war cry of democratic simplicity had been invented to make a new Minister pay four times as much rent as a Legation was worth, and they hated me for standing between them and the shorn lamb of the moment. Nevertheless they were at me the instant they heard any rumour of a change, begging me for introductions to the new Minister, promising me fat commissions if I would land him for them, trying to work off on me the same old houses they had tried for years to work off on me. There was a house up in Selvi Sîra that no one has ever lived in without meeting a sudden and violent end. There was another house that some mysterious person was always setting on fire. There was a big marble house near the British Embassy that stood empty for years because of a spring in the cellar that nobody could stop up or pipe away. Time and again they brought it to me in their pocket, all nicely dried out with a bath towel. I don't know what they didn't bring me. It was rather amusing, too, you know. I came across all sorts of things. But you are forever coming across things in this extraordinary town of theirs. Did you ever see such a place?

However, I was looking, as I say, for a Legation. And I ended by coming across something

new. For me, at least, it was new. Just wait till I give it to you in order.

## II

The house stood in the middle of a huge garden, somewhere up in the Taxim. The place was more Italian than most of them here. The terraces had big marble balustrades, and there were statues and fountains and things. The best of it was that you could see everywhere—the lower half of the Bosphorus and the Marmora, that is. And from the top of the house, where there was a kind of belvedere, you could look over into the Golden Horn—I don't know how far up.

An old man showed me about. He had more the air of a family servant than of a mere custodian. I asked him to whom the place belonged.

"Madame Belize," he said. Then he corrected himself. "No, I mean Missiri Bey."

I laughed. "Well, which?"

"Missiri Bey," he answered queerly. "Madame Belize"—he paused a moment—"is dead."

I don't suppose any of you young fellows ever saw Missiri. He used to come here to the club a good deal, especially when there was playing. But I'm afraid to guess how long ago. He was of the place, you know—a Levantine—with

more kinds of blood in him than wines at a banquet. He was in the *Régie*, I believe; was richish, and had been quite a dragon in his day. Belize was a name new to me, though. That is, for such a house. I could not think why I had never known about it, nor about Madame. So I asked the old man who she was.

He looked at me as if he thought it strange that I should ask. And I didn't wonder—afterward.

"Madame Belize?" He hesitated a little. "You know the *Pâtisserie Belize*? She was the wife of that Monsieur Belize."

I was rather surprised. I knew that name of course, as you all do. Who has not munched little cakes and sipped little liqueurs at Belize's? But I had not connected a *pâtisserie* with such a place as the one I was looking at. One somehow imagines *pâtisseries* to exist to and for themselves, without anything behind them. But Belize's has a good deal behind it.

I didn't find out just then, though. I found out first that while they much preferred to sell, they were willing under certain conditions to let—unfurnished. It was well worth considering. The house was very decent as houses here go. It was built on the good old plan of central halls running through from front to back, with the rooms opening out on each side. But there



was one peculiarity. I discovered that as soon as we went in. The walls of the big marble entrance hall were completely lined with mirror-glass. I don't mean French mirrors with those impossible gilt frames. Each wall was simply one gigantic looking-glass, with hardly so much as a knob or a crack in it. It gave the strangest illusion of space. However, I thought little of it then. You see the wildest freaks in these houses. Nor did I think much when the walls of the grand staircase proved to be similarly decorated. It had to go with the hall, more or less. But the upper hall did not have to go with the lower, nor did the rooms of state. They did, nevertheless. Every room in the place, if you please—not counting the *pièces de service*—was tricked out in the same way. Every room, that is, except two. These adjoined each other, and were lined with a charming old green damask.

When we came to that green damask I simply couldn't hold in any longer.

"If you had twenty rooms in green damask and two in glass, I might think about it!" I cried out. "But as it is——" I laughed.

The old man looked at me very solemnly. "Excuse me," he said, with a kind of respectful reproach; "it is not a thing for laughter."

"Well, I suppose not," I conceded, as hand-

somely as I could—"with what it must have cost and with what it would cost to put the walls in order again. Will Missiri Bey do it for us?"

"Ah, there is nothing that Missiri Bey will not do!" he exclaimed, shrugging his shoulders.

I don't know—I began to get curious. It was not only that I had never in my life seen such a preposterous place. The old man himself, with his tones and his gestures, made all sorts of questions go through my head. I was aching to ask where Monsieur Belize came in—or went out—and where Missiri. But I contented myself with echoing:

"Oh, Missiri Bey!"

It was evidently my cue. I saw that by the old man's look. But I wanted more than looks! We returned to the great hall of the second floor—the *première*, as you have it. The place was extraordinary, with its mirror walls. It was enough to drive one silly. In all the huge bareness of it there was nothing but an infinity of reflections—until one doubted even the good green garden trees at the end windows. It reached out on each side to interminable vistas, and the two of us were merely the nearest of an army.

"What things these walls have seen, eh?" I

uttered at last. "One can imagine—with lights and flowers and silks and jewels and uniforms and all!"

The old man looked about and slowly shook his head.

"They have seen things—the mirrors. But not what you think. Madame Belize——" He stopped.

"She was an invalid?" I ventured.

"Oh, no!" he answered quickly, almost as if I had made an accusation. And after a moment: "She was the most beautiful woman in the world. She was always alone. That is, after the mirrors. . . . That was why she had them. She said they gave her company."

I took this in with open mouth. One could imagine oneself to have company well enough, seeing the crowds of old men and house hunters who dwindled away on either hand. But what company! I need not tell you that I let legations go to pot—after that. My old man and his Madame Belize were much too interesting. I don't need to tell you, either, how it was with the old man. He wasn't the kind that you could corrupt. It was simply that he was full of his story and hadn't had a chance to tell it. So I got it. It was a little queer, too, you know—what I got. But everything's a little queer in this place.

## III

It all began with old Belize. There originally had been a Belize, it seemed. He was a Levantine, too; less mixed up than Missiri, perhaps, but by no means so high up—even as things go here. And he was a humpback into the bargain. He kept a little *Pâtisserie Française* down in Galata somewhere, and made enough money out of it to go one day to Budapest. That is what these people do, you know—they go to Budapest. It is the nearest outpost of civilization.

Our humpback Belize had a good time there, too. He went up to Margitsziget—you know, that jolly island in the Danube. Only I must believe that his experience was in some particulars unique. Not that it was so remarkable for him to admire the first *Kellnerinn* he saw in the first beer garden he entered. We have all admired a *Kellnerinn*. But with us admiration operates—what shall I say?—more lightly, less fatefully. There are also *kellnerinns* and *kellnerinns*. To this one, however, Belize said, as if on second thought he would order another beer:

“Will you go to Constantinople with me tomorrow?”

Imagine! He had barely arrived, and had intended to take a bit of a holiday. He must have been quite a man, Belize. Not only was he

a *pâtisiseur*, you remember, but he was also a humpback. While she— I never saw her, of course, but my old man quite lost himself describing her. He was the confidential attaché of the first *pâtisserie*, and knew her from the beginning. She was tall, and rather fair for a Hungarian—or she might have been Austrian—and she had an air. She had an air! I imagine that she may have been one of those lovely impassive women who frighten you so much more than they deserve, simply because they are so impassive and so lovely.

Well, the *Kellnerin* looked at Belize a minute. She had eyes, the old man said—and he, too, for that matter. Then she said:

“Thank you, no. I already have a husband.”

“What are you doing here, then?” inquired Belize.

“I am getting my bread and onions,” replied the girl.

“Oh!” says Belize. “Is your husband a cripple?”

“No,” said she. “He is a stone-cutter.”

“Does he ever try his chisel on your back, perhaps?”

“Eh! When he is drunk.”

“I see,” returned Belize. “Have you children?”

The *Kellnerin* shook her head.



"It would not have mattered—if they were pretty," said Belize. "Take me to your stone-cutter."

Did you ever hear of such a thing? Any other man would either have given up the job or have tried to make the *Kellnerinn* run away. Any other *Kellnerinn* would have turned her back or would have bolted on the spot. But not so these two. Belize waited until his lady was free, and then he went with her to the stone-cutter. There they seem to have had a perfectly unimpassioned business discussion. I should judge that none of them were given to superfluous words. As for the stone-cutter, he apparently jumped at the chance. All he held out for was a subsidy larger than the income which his wife had been able to provide for him, which Belize was ready enough to grant—even to instant payment of the first installment.

So off they went together, Beauty and the Beast, and speedily put the Balkans between themselves and their stone-cutter. Who doubtless called himself a very lucky fellow, became more of a stranger to his profession than ever, and kicked his heels all day long on the embankments of the Danube. The *Kellnerinn* is the one I wonder most about, though—Madame Belize, as they called her. Was she really in love with her humpback? Or was anybody

better than the stone-cutter? At all events, Belize had no occasion to regret his adventure. Not only did Madame turn out a famous cook, under the tutelage of Monsieur, but she had ideas of her own—from Budapest. And what was more, she attracted custom better than the sweetest cakes or the headiest liqueurs ever invented.

Her sphere, however, soon became too narrow. The Châteaubriands and Ampères so increased in number that Belize moved up the hill. Then he moved again, and established branches, and finally built the big place you all know. That extraordinary trip to Budapest was literally the making of him. He grew so rich that he couldn't possibly use all his money in sweets. He began to buy houses about here in town. He also picked up estates on the Bosphorus and at the islands.

And it all began with a *Kellnerin*! Except for the bargain with the stone-cutter there was never anything questionable. And the openness of that bargain put it by itself. The thing was merely that Madame's charm threw the balance on the side of success.

She naturally withdrew from the shop by the time they reached the top of the hill. They began the house then. One could rather tell a good deal from that, you know. There was

nothing like it in Pera. But they had only just moved in when Belize died.

He left everything to her.

#### IV

I imagine old Belize never did much in the social line, even after he had money. He was too much *pâtisiseur*. And then, of course, there was his deformity. But Madame, after a considerable period of widowhood, seems gradually to have enlarged her borders. Indeed, she could scarcely have avoided it. You can easily see that by that time she was very much in the nature of a *grande dame*. She was richer than anybody else, and if she had the *pâtisserie* against her she had for her the famous charm. Moreover, with Belize out of the way, she naturally made a very different pair of sleeves. And no one could accuse our dear Pera of being too squeamish as to pedigrees! So Madame seems gradually to have gone into the world. It was then really that Missiri came on the tapis. He was one of the original Châteaubriands of Galata, as I have said, and later seems to have stood sponsor for Madame Belize in society. So our *Kellnerinn*, having begun her career by an apparently unpromising marriage to a drunken stone-cutter of Budapest, ended by becoming the queen of Pera.

And then, if you please, the stone-cutter turned up! It was quite too dreadful. He belonged to a period so remote that they had forgotten all about him. He had never given a sign, and Belize had left no directions about the subsidy. They therefore concluded that the man was otherwise disposed of. He, however, was the last man in the world to think of dying with a draft coming to him once a month as regularly as the moon. Accordingly, when it stopped he decided to look into things.

He happened to choose a highly melodramatic moment for so doing. You should have heard the old man! Madame Belize was giving a great party. The old man was major-domo then, and when he spied this long fellow whom anybody would have known for a peasant *endimanché*, he guessed at once. He tried to send the man away, but the stone-cutter would not be sent. On the contrary, he succeeded in slipping into the house. There was something like a scramble up the stairs, the Hungarian first and the servants after. At the top stood Madame Belize, receiving her guests. Missiri stood near her, as master of ceremonies, and beyond them the great hall was crowded.

Well, there was the scramble up the stairs and people pressed to see what it was. And then the Hungarian stopped. He caught sight of

Madame Belize, in the wonder of her silks and her jewels and her beauty. He caught sight of Madame Belize, whom he had known as a peasant girl on the Danube, whom more than once he had beaten. And he laughed. As for Madame Belize, she never stirred except to turn her head upon the peasant in all her splendour and to order the servants away.

"What do you want?" she asked, very gently.

"Money!" replied the stone-cutter. "I got no more, and I came to see about it. I see!"

And he laughed again. He, too, was a type—the stone-cutter. At this Missiri stepped forward angrily. They had been speaking in their own language, of course, and no one understood—almost no one.

"Who is this fellow?" cried out Missiri. "Let me throw him downstairs if the servants won't!"

Madame Belize turned to him and smiled faintly. She turned to them all.

"No," she said. "He is my husband. He used to beat me. I pay him not to. Excuse me a moment while I get him the money. I owe him for several months." She made a deep courtesy, bowing her jewelled head with that faint smile of hers. Then she said something to the stone-cutter. And through a lane of satins and uniforms he followed her away.



You can just imagine! Things happen in Pera to make your hair stand on end. But things don't happen like that, at balls. And nobody had known about Madame Belize. You see, the *patisseur* had not taken them into his confidence. So they began tumbling down those stairs faster than the stone-cutter had tumbled up. You should have heard the old man! He shed tears of fury as he told me—years afterward, too.

"She!" he cried. "She who never harmed a creature, who was better than an angel, who did not even leave a husband that beat her until he sent her away for the money it would bring him! She, around whose table they had crowded like a pack of hungry curs, insulted by those——"

It would hardly do for me to repeat the epithets which he applied to the society of which you are ornaments so conspicuous! But it was too good a chance for them to prove the delicacy of their sensibilities. Once the first made for the door, the rest followed as if the plague were in the house.

Madame Belize came back in the midst of it. The stone-cutter was still with her. No one ever knew just what passed between them. It was something, however, which made him less jaunty than before. She took her place at the

head of the stairs and kept him beside her, watching the people go. They would rather have jumped from the windows than pass before her, the old man said. For all their haughtiness, they were afraid of that strange smile of hers. They pushed by without so much as a look—most of them. As for her, she watched until they were all gone—even Missiri. He lingered a moment, to be sure, with his eyes on the two of them. But at last he bolted like the others, leaving Madame and her stone-cutter alone.

They looked at each other.

"You see!" she said. "They have gone. They are afraid of you."

He laughed again. But she stopped him.

"And now you can go, too. This is my house, you know."

At this he stared about again, and exclaimed:

"Ah, you are afraid of me, like the rest!"

She smiled. "Afraid? I think I know you too well. Besides, what more can you do? They will never come back. It is only, you see, that everything is finished. Good-bye."

They looked into each other's eyes, and that which the stone-cutter saw made him start slowly down the stairs. After a few steps he stopped, as if he would have gone back. But her eyes were still too much for him. Once

more he turned from them and went on, out of the house. She never saw him again.

## V

The old man said that she stood there a long time, alone, looking down the empty stairs—the servants not daring to stir. Then finally she called them all before her, to the last scullion and stable-boy, there below her on the steps. And she spoke to them.

“I have made a mistake,” she said. “I want to tell you what it was, because there is no one else I can tell. My mistake was this, that I did not explain. I did not think to tell people what I tell you now: that I used to be a poor peasant girl in Hungary, poorer than any of you; that I married a handsome young stone-cutter and went to Budapest; that we grew tired of each other; that he, because he was tired of me, began to drink; that I, because I was tired of him, became a servant in a café; that there I met Monsieur Belize, who offered to take me away and make me happy; that when my husband agreed I came. Perhaps I thought they knew—that Monsieur Belize had told them. At any rate, I did not mean to deceive them. When people came to me I thought it was because they liked to. I thought it was more to be, than to say or to do. But it is not enough. And now

for my mistake I must pay. I have already begun, you see, to pay. My friends have all gone. They will never come back. You will want to go, too, when you hear what they say. This has become a house of scandal. It will be hard for you to get other places if people know that you come from here. You will not care to tell them that you serve a woman like me. And then, of course, it will be different here after this. There will be no more music and dancing. You will find it very dull. So I dismiss you all. I will see that none of you suffer because of the suddenness of my decision. I thank you all for what you have done for me. Good-night."

And with that she left them staring at each other on the stairs.

What do you think of that, eh? It's the kind of thing that happens only in *feuilletons*—or in Constantinople. My old man didn't make it up, you know. He wasn't that kind. If he had been he might have made another side of the affair a little clearer. For I don't suppose Madame Belize really regretted what she had done—in leaving Budapest, that is—or that she had any idea of giving such an impression. And of course nobody else really cared, here of all places in the world. Somebody started that famous stampede and the rest lost their heads

like sheep. What Madame Belize must have minded was the stampede. At all events that party, quite as Madame Belize had prophesied to the stone-cutter, was the end of everything. The queen of Pera was deposed in a day and another reigned in her stead. But how they must have ached to go back!

I have no idea, either, that in that business of the servants Madame Belize intended a *coup de théâtre*. It was merely, so far as I could make out, that she was the most direct creature in the world. But of course she could have done nothing cleverer to keep them. They had adored her before; what could they do after? A few of them naturally did leave in time, for one reason or another. At the moment, though, or rather the next day, they waited on her in a deputation, with the old man at their head, and vowed eternal fidelity in a way that seems to have affected her very much. So she kept them all on, in spite of the fact that there was nothing left for three quarters of them to do. It was to give them occupation, really, that she began some of the strange things she did.

For myself, I rather wondered why she didn't go away. You can easily imagine that to have your visiting list wiped clean, from one day to the other, might lend attractions to a voyage of discovery. She might have moved to Paris or



Rome, and who would have cared what these twopenny half-breeds said in Constantinople? But that was one of the things I couldn't get, directly, from the old man. It may have been her pride, or perhaps she didn't know that Rome and Paris existed! Or—what? However, she had affairs to attend to, and that gave her something to do. She made no bones about going out—for business, or to drive. I had that from others too. They used to meet her on the Grande Rue or along the quays, ignoring the world as completely as the world ignored her. She even kept on with her modistes, and went about in the most wonderful gowns—with no one but servants to see them.

But as time went on she kept more and more to her own little world, and gradually came to confine her excursions to her own grounds. The old man said she would drive solemnly round and round them in her smartest victoria, with footman and everything, bowing to the gardeners as if they had been grand viziers. She liked, too, to go to the belvedere at the top of the house. You could simply see everything from there. When she came down she would say that she had been seeing the world! For the rest, she never made any fuss. Except for the solitude, no one would have guessed that anything had happened. She kept

the place up just the same as ever. And that must have been quite a job, you know. You have no idea what can be made out of cakes and liqueurs. The house was somewhat on the scale of Beylerbey Palace. And every night, the old man said, as if she expected the diplomatic corps and a prince of the blood, she filled it with candles and flowers.

What that solitude must have been it is difficult to imagine. You see, she hadn't so much as a poor relation, and if Belize had any they dropped her like everybody else. I gathered that they were all rather put to it, sometimes, to make the thing go. As, for instance, when Madame Belize elected to give great parties—to herself—with an orchestra playing waltzes in the empty ballroom. There must have been clearnesses of vision in her, and delicacies of imagination, which from the very beginning had made her do the unexpected thing. So when it comes to the matter of the mirrors, how are you to say whether it was the conceit of a mind sadly whimsical, or of one already touched by its tragedy? She began with the grand stairway. It was where she had last seen people in the house, you remember. Then she did the halls, and finally the rooms. She said it gave her company!

I asked the old man about the two chambers

in green damask. He looked at me as if I had made an indelicate allusion.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "Those were her own."

He set it forth, on the whole, very well. You could quite see it all—the empty house, the lonely woman, the multiplying mirrors. I don't see how she stood such a wraith of a life. For that matter, I don't see how the servants stood it. But they simply worshipped her—I don't know like what. The only thing she required of them was to be gentle. If she ever knew of their quarrelling or misnaming each other—which even servants will do—she would have them up and tell them they lived in a glass house: they must not throw stones. . . .

Just fancy it all! From that world outside where she had played such a part, where she had played so many parts, not a creature but the dressmaker now came near her. And there in her great house of glass she lived alone, with her shadows and her memories. And every night, in all her jewels, with the liveried footmen all in line, she would dine by herself, between the million repetitions of her that faded away in the candlelight; and she would rustle away through those strange silent rooms, looking about into the mirrors for the faces that were not there.

## VI

But it is time I mentioned Missiri. If I haven't done so before it is because the part he plays is almost as detached from the Madame Belize of Pera as was Belize himself from the *Kellnerinn* of Budapest. I told you that after that famous party no one ever went back. It is virtually true, and for a long time it was actually true. At last, however, one of them did go back. For Missiri Bey, as the old man very truly remarked, would do anything. He had been of the stampede, you know; but he had been the last, and he had hesitated before positively going out of the door. He could bank on that, you see! So after a while he began by sending flowers. He continued by carrying them. He ended by taking them in. And Madame Belize, of whom no one could ever predict what she would do, received him as if they had parted the day before. She didn't fall on his neck, but neither did she slam the door in his face.

The upshot of it all seemed to be that Missiri became a regular visitor and was occasionally asked to dine. That, however, was as far as he got. If he hoped to marry his hostess, as he doubtless did, I can inform you here and now that he never realized the hope. And if he thought that he could make her forget the

stampede and be grateful for a friend, he misjudged alike the quality of her memory and of her friendship. I don't know whether she ever guessed what the servants knew from their fellow menials in Pera—that he took no pains to conceal from the public his assiduity at her door, and that by means of the stories which he allowed to circulate unchallenged his vanity made good outside her house the losses it sustained within. The gossips had capital to begin with, and they naturally found it the easiest thing in the world to put it at interest. But in spite of the flowers and the dinners and everything else, Missiri never got a step farther than he did in the old *patisserie* of Galata. Which made what happened in the end all the more extraordinary.

It may not strike you that way, but what I could make out of the slenderness of the relation between Madame Belize and Missiri seemed to me one of the most characteristic touches of the story. He wasn't clever enough to see, when she let him come back, how little he counted. He simply made no difference one way or the other. He could not change anything. He could only help her out with the mirrors. It was all very well to fix up herself and her house for parties, but where were the uniforms? Whereas with Missiri——! At any rate, the old man



told me some rather queer things. They used to hear her talking to herself, and sometimes they saw her, through the doors, courtesying and making signs—to the mirrors. It rather gave them the creeps. When they were in the room with her, though, she was always perfectly straight in her head. At least the old man wouldn't admit anything else. And all this went on for years. Madame Belize had been young when she came to Constantinople. She must have been nearer forty than thirty when Belize died. She grew old alone in her house of glass. And then——! The end was quite of a piece with the beginning.

One night Madame Belize was at dinner, *décolletée* and jewelled as always, with her people waiting on her. Suddenly she began to stare at the wall in front of her. "Who is that?" she demanded in a queer tone.

"It is only one of the men, Madame, passing the door behind you," answered the old man.

She insisted, nevertheless, on going over to the mirror.

"There is no one, Madame," the old man assured her again, a little uneasy. But she called for candles, and had a couple of footmen hold them up behind her while she peered into the glass. The business began to get on their nerves. They didn't know what she would do

next. As for Madame, what she did next was to say:

"Ah no; there is no one. Only I—I—— Bring me more candles so that I can see."

She made them do it, if you please, while she looked at herself, turning this way and that. She looked at her faded hair, at the wrinkles about her eyes and mouth, at her shoulders shrunk beneath their jewels, at her thin fingers with their heavy rings. Then she began to laugh, while the footmen grew white behind her with the candles.

"Don't be afraid!" she exclaimed. "There is no one! It is only I! There is never any one! Always I, I, I!" And she laughed again.

It must have been rather horrid, you know—in the big, dim, twinkling house. They were all scared out of their boots.

"Are you faint, Madame?" asked the old man. "Will you have some wine?"

"No," she said. "I am only old. We have played a long time. Call my maid. I am going upstairs."

They took her upstairs, and she never came down again. She didn't seem particularly ill—at first. She was merely feeble. Nothing, however, could induce her to leave her own rooms. She suddenly had a horror of the mirrors. She said there were too many people in them. . . .

When Missiri heard about it, as he very soon did, he of course waxed doubly attentive. He sent a message and a flower every minute. She wouldn't see him, though—not even while she was able to be about and in her boudoir. It was the one part of the house to which she had never admitted him. But there came a day! It was not long after she had taken to her bed. It was the day when the doctor let them send for the priest. The doctor was Missiri's. I suppose the priest was too. The servants were afraid of them all, but they were off their heads with consternation, and there was not a single friend to come near the woman. Not one! The doctor had done what he could. The priest had performed his part. Then Missiri's turn came. And I remember now the old man's exclamation:

“Ah, if he had had an onion for a heart he could not have done it!”

For the first time, for the very first time, when there was no one to keep him out, Missiri went into the green boudoir. He passed on into the darkened bedroom. Madame Belize had been, they thought, unconscious. But at his approach she opened her eyes. And she gave him a look!

“Missiri Bey,” she asked in her dying voice, “what are you doing here?”

He stopped a minute, the old man said, took a paper from his pocket, and went nearer.

"I come for your affairs, dear Madame," he answered. "You have been indisposed for some time, you know, and matters press. If you could give me a moment—— Then I will go at once."

He advanced a step. She kept her eyes on him—terrible eyes, the old man said—and he had the courage to face it out. At last she uttered strangely: "Ah, it is the receipt, I suppose."

"Yes, dear Madame," said Missiri, approaching her with the paper. "It is the receipt. If you would be so good as to sign——"

"Sign?" she demanded. "Do I pay and sign too?"

"Yes," he had the assurance to reply—without any idea, of course, what she meant. "Let me assist you." He was at the bedside now, and he made as if to support her.

"Stop!" she cried. "Do not dare to touch me! Give them to me!" Waving him imperiously away, she raised herself in the bed and took the pen which he dipped for her. But before writing at the place he indicated she looked at him again. And that time, the old man said, he began to look green. However, she signed. Then she pointed to the door. "Go!" she

gasped. "Go back to them! They gave, and they made me pay! And I have paid—all! There is no more they can ask! Now let me die in peace!"

She watched Missiri out of the room. Then she fell back. She never spoke again.

## VII

The old man's story made an extraordinary impression upon me. It wasn't so much the way he told it, you know, or that it had any particular sequence in itself. I don't know—it may have been the empty hall with its receding reflections. One thought of what the mirrors had seen. One caught faint shadows of it, far away, at the end of the vista. It was uncanny. And one had such a sense of the queerness, here, of everything—that that peasant girl, without lifting a finger, could have had all those things piled into her lap, and in the end could have been robbed of them all.

"He wants to sell it, eh?" I asked after a long pause.

"Yes," said the old man. "Do you wonder?" Then: "The furniture, you see, he has taken away."

I waited a moment.

"Did he get everything?" I asked. "Even the *patisserie*?"



“Even the *patisserie*! Why not? Who was there to say no? He wears mourning, and the ladies condole with him! Wait; you will see. Here he is. He knew of your appointment.”

As we stood there a sound of steps came slowly up the stair. We waited, our eyes upon the landing. But the figure that mounted into sight was not the one we expected. He was perhaps more white-haired than Missiri, yet taller and better-looking. What particularly attracted my attention, however, was the oddity of his dress—his peaked hat and his tasselled top-boots. He returned my regard with equal curiosity.

As for my companion, he made at first not the slightest sign of recognition. Then he suddenly clutched my arm, and a strange light broke upon his face.

“The stone-cutter!” he cried.

## THE HOUSE OF THE GIRAFFE

*Here, forsooth, is the home of all the paintpots, said I.*

—F. Nietzsche: THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA.

### I

ON ALMOST any day of the year you may look south from Constantinople, across the Sea of Marmora, at a broken line of blue hills that remind you a little of the mountains bounding the Venetian lagoon. Those blue hills, or the clearest and easternmost of them, belong to a high wooded promontory that divides the Asiatic end of the Marmora into two unequal gulfs. Along the north shore of the upper and longer gulf runs the Bagdad railway—by which, no doubt, you will one day travel in your international sleeping car from London to Delhi. And, having passed the hill-top grave of Hannibal, you will see your last of blue water at Nicomedia, which Diocletian made for a moment the capital of the Roman Empire. Not far from the south shore of the lower gulf lies, at the foot of the Bithynian Olympus, the old city of Broussa, the first capital of the Turks and the Pantheon of the found-

ers of their power. But no imperial tradition and no modern highway links to the rest of the world the intermediate promontory. It is true that emperors did resort of old to certain hot springs in a fold of the blue hills—which turn green as you approach them. A persevering company even tries to-day, without too flattering success, to rehabilitate that fallen Asiatic Carlsbad. There is no reason why the company should not in the end succeed. The blue-green hills are in themselves a romantic enough piece of nature, pointing into their bright east-Mediterranean lagoon. Above the Gulf of Nicomedia they rise the more abruptly, the hills, and are more thickly wooded. The other side, protected from Black Sea winds and open to all the sun of the south, is a little Riviera of olive, cypress, and vine. But people do not forget that brigands have been known to amuse themselves by carrying off the clients of the baths. And other resorts are more modern in their appointments. So the blue-green hills, although in sight of the world, remain out of it. Not quite wild and not yet civilized, they make a strange little world of their own where fragments of wandering races, stubbornly immiscible, lodge scattered and uneasy among the old Greek ghosts of the land.

On the south shore of this peninsula, not far

from a Turkish village that is half lost among immense cypresses and plane trees, a deserted garden looks across the Gulf of Moudania at the Asiatic Olympus. You would hardly know that a garden had ever been there, were it not for a tumble-down little kiosque of two or three rooms, overlooking the beach, such as the Turks always like to build in their country places. There are also poppy-grown fragments of wall and, in the central jungle of green, the ruins of a house—or of the foundations of a house. But what most visibly marks the spot as an old pleasure ground is a great bronze giraffe that lifts its awkward neck among the trees. To a foreigner, indeed, a life-sized image of a giraffe might not suggest a garden. The Turks, however, regard statuary somewhat as the Anglo-Saxons do. They are afraid of it. When they become acquainted with European gardens, therefore, and set about imitating them, they not uncommonly replace the classic garden god by a statue of an animal. So it is that that ungainly bronze giraffe, made in Germany, stands in a tangle of Turkish green on an old Greek shore, staring strangely across its little blue sea toward the country of Antinous.

The villagers say, now, that the House of the Giraffe would still be standing, and that Nousret Pasha would not have been killed, if he

had listened to a gypsy. She prophesied to him that if he finished the house it would burn to the ground and he would die. But he was not the man, Nousret Pasha, to be frightened out of a thing he had set his heart upon—even by a gypsy fortune teller. For he was incredibly ignorant. He said the gypsy would have made a different prophecy if he had given her what she asked. Moreover, he knew well enough that nobody wanted him to live there—although he loved the place, if he loved anything. He was born there, and passed his youth there, and made a reputation there as a *pehlivan*—a wrestler—and had been one of those who amused themselves by carrying off the clients of the baths on the other side of the mountain. That he found profitable as well as amusing.

In the course of time, however, he found even more profitable and considerably safer game in Constantinople, where he became a notorious figure during the last years of the old régime. He was a huge man with a big jaw and no neck, and beady little eyes set close together. He had always been a dandy. In his second period his taste ran to shrill waistcoats, lumpy jewellery, and unquenchable perfumes. He used to spend a good part of his time driving about Pera in a gaudy yellow satin victoria that was better suited to a comic opera queen than to a



dirty ruffian like himself. He would sit up very straight in the middle of the yellow satin seat, turning his beady eyes this way and that without moving his head. Very little escaped those beady eyes. And if they happened to light on anything that pleased Nousret Pasha, why Nousret Pasha generally ended by having it. For he was the Sultan's milk-brother. His mother, that is, had been the Sultan's nurse. Many of us, no doubt, have foster brothers, of whose existence we are less rather than more definitely aware. Sultan Hamid, however, was not of so neglectful a disposition. And so, although born of a humble family of peasants in an obscure village of the Marmora, Nousret ended by becoming a Pasha, and the pattern of a scoundrel—all through a pretty piece of Oriental sentiment.

I suppose it might be easy to become the pattern of a scoundrel if one were free to do absolutely anything that came into one's head. The whole trend of our modern world has been against the enjoyment of such freedom. Few people, nowadays, ever have a chance to commit themselves. A great artist does, in his way, and perhaps a great financier. Certainly the latter has a greater power of publishing his own bad taste or of tampering with other lives than a modern king. Asia, however, despite inev-

itable tendencies, is not yet the modern world. There it is still possible for a man to do just what he likes—the corollary being, of course, that other men must do nothing they like. At least it was so in Turkey under Sultan Abd-ül-Hamid II, whose reign was a legend of Boccaccio and of the Arabian Nights woven into one. Under the shadow of so great a tyrant little tyrants had room to grow. And one of them was he who built the House of the Giraffe.

It was incredible how many people Nousret Pasha ruined or did away with, how he robbed right and left, and went into every imaginable form of rascality that promised an instant's amusement or a *para's* worth of gain. Not that his requirements were as a usual thing so modest. He made a tremendous income simply out of blackmail, threatening to send the Sultan such and such reports unless such and such sums were forthcoming. For he was one of the Sultan's most indefatigable spies. The Sultan liked him for that; also because he was a first-rate shot. He was uneasy, Sultan Hamid, unless he had such a man near him when he went out in public. He often called Nousret up to the Palace to give exhibitions of his prowess. Nousret could shoot a five piastre piece from between a man's fingers at fifty yards, or flick the ashes off his cigarette. And sometimes the

Sultan hinted that if the shot went a little wild no one would hold Nousret Pasha responsible.

Nousret Pasha had learned to shoot in his native mountains. He had always been passionately fond of hunting. That was one reason why he built the House of the Giraffe. He kept any number of horses and dogs down there. The villagers say he often kept bears as well, which he caught as cubs in the mountains. When they got too big he would set the dogs on them. He liked to watch the poor brutes being torn to pieces. Bears and dogs, though, were not his only company on the peninsula. He often took visitors down to stay with him. One of them afterward starred in the cafés-chantant of Hungary as the Princess Nousret Pasha. In fact it was rather dangerous to decline an invitation to the House of the Giraffe. One young woman was shot because she did—she and her mother and her servant and her dog. Nousret Pasha walked into the house one night when they were at dinner and coolly potted the four of them. And no one dared to raise a finger—simply because he was Nousret Pasha, and Nousret Pasha was the Sultan's milk-brother.

## II

On a certain summer day in 1908 Nousret Pasha was driving, not in his yellow satin vic-

toria but in a smart trap, over the hills on the European shore of the Bosphorus. He was being driven, that is to say, by his coachman Ali. This dark, slight, good-looking wearer of a braided black livery was, although the Pasha never put it to himself in so many words, the Pasha's best friend. They had been boys together in the Marmora, they had hunted, wrestled, and kidnapped together, and Nousret had done very little since in which Ali had not had a part. Yet, from Ali's face, you would not have thought so. He had the simple, honest, serious look of so many of his people. And certainly he was by nature one who would have done the Sultan more honour as a milk-brother. But because Nousret was the older and had always been the leader, and because Ali had eaten his bread for so many years, Ali remained faithful to his infamous master with a faithfulness which only a Turk or an Albanian can show.

As they jolted down the stony road that leads from the top of the hill to Stenia Bay, they passed two ladies walking. In town it would not have been easy to get a definite impression of two promenading Turkish ladies; but being in the country these two wore veils only over their hair, and no enveloping *charshaf*. Nousret Pasha accordingly perceived, being a connois-

seur in such matters, that one of the ladies was extremely handsome. She had long and rather narrow dark eyes, over which eyebrows arched so delicately on a fair skin that he knew they were not painted; and from beneath the white veil escaped a strand or two of wavy hair that had in it a reddish glint. The second promenader was apparently the servant of the first, and Nousret Pasha wasted no glances on her. Not that Nousret Pasha disdained to stoop so low, if a servant were worth looking at. He immediately nudged Ali, and Ali immediately turned his horses around. The two walkers betrayed a certain surprise at seeing the trap a second time. Nousret Pasha kept his beady eyes on them, or one of them, as he went by, and for some distance beyond. He then signalled Ali to turn again. But before this graceful manœuvre was completed the two objectives of it disappeared into a gateway.

Nousret Pasha had an instant of surprise. Having reached the same gateway, however, he directed Ali to stop. An Albanian porter came out, thinking a visitor had arrived.

"Pardon me," said Nousret Pasha politely, "but I am not quite sure where I am. Can you tell me whose house this is?"

The porter took in the shining trap, the trim coachman, the conspicuously dressed and per-



fumed gentleman who accosted him, and replied with his hands respectfully crossed on his girdle:

"This, *Effendim*, is the house of Ahmed Bey. But he is not at home."

"Ah!" uttered Nousret Pasha, fixing his beady eyes on an underling who did not at first sight call him Pasha. He then drew out with his most important air a silk pocketbook, diffusing a cloud of musk as he did so, and handed to the porter a large printed card. "Give the Bey this." He lifted his chin, to ease it of an uncomfortable collar, and glanced down sideways at the porter. "Those ladies who just went in—— They are——?"

"It is the family of the Bey," replied the Albanian, a shade more gravely. For the visitor had transcended the limits of good form.

"H'm. Just tell the Bey I came." And dropping a gold piece into the porter's hand Nousret Pasha ordered Ali to drive on.

### III

Ahmed Bey, as a matter of fact, was one of the last people in Constantinople upon whom Nousret Pasha would have taken the trouble to call. He was too honest to be in favour at court and too poor to be worth pillaging. But even such a man might have his possibilities, it

seemed. Accordingly when Nousret Pasha got home that night he announced to his wife that she was to go to Emirgyan the next day and call on Madam Ahmed Bey. For there had been something in those long eyes under their arched eyebrows that made him think this a case to go about with circumspection.

As for Madam Nousret Pasha, she was by no means unused to such commands from her formidable spouse. She had led a somewhat varied career herself, and had thereby picked up a philosophy. There was no love lost between her and Nousret Pasha, who would long ago have divorced her had she not been a present from the Sultan. She was one of those who, wasting their sweetness on the desert air of the imperial harem, were sometimes given away in compliment or punishment. So she lived where she could in the crannies of her husband's whims. And she duly went to call on Madam Ahmed Bey, in a closed brougham, with a black eunuch sitting on the box as if to guard the dearest treasure of the Pasha's heart.

Madam Ahmed Bey received her caller politely, at first not knowing who she was. But Madam Ahmed Bey failed to return the call. Turkish ladies of the old school are not quite so meticulous on such points as European ladies,

however. Nousret Pasha, furthermore, could not consider himself slighted by a nobody like Ahmed Bey. Madam Nousret Pasha accordingly gave a party at her own country house in Bebek, and the first person she invited was Madam Ahmed Bey. Madam Ahmed Bey, as it happened, was otherwise engaged for that day. And asked, later, to set her own day for coming to Bebek, she replied that she suffered from ill health and never went into the world.

This course of events was a little longer drawn out than Nousret Pasha expected. He had grown used, among his own people at least, to have every one come when he whistled. Who was a Madam Ahmed Bey that she should refuse the advances of a Madam Nousret Pasha? Yet she was, her course of action only made him remember the more vividly, the possessor of divinely white skin, and waving hair of red glints, and eyebrows inimitably arched, and long dark eyes that he meant to look into again. And he was a hunter, adept in all courings and doublings. So at last he sent word to Ahmed Bey, who had only returned his own card, that he would dine at Emirgyan on such and such an evening. In the East one may do that—and best of all a man like Nousret Pasha. Nor may a man like Ahmed Bey refuse such an invitation. He therefore prepared accordingly.

He engaged extra cooks, he hired dancing girls and dancing boys from the Jews who deal in such commodities, and he caused inquiry to be made of his prospective guest as to what other guests should be invited.

Nousret Pasha flatteringly made answer that he desired to dine in intimacy, and that no company could be preferred to that of his friend Ahmed Bey.

#### IV

With his friend Ahmed Bey he consequently dined, and the affair went better than he expected. Ahmed Bey seemed to wish to make up for his wife's coolness toward Madam Nousret Pasha. He showed Nousret Pasha his garden, which, having been inherited from grandfathers and great-grandfathers, was not ill to look upon, albeit somewhat wild and overgrown. He then took Nousret Pasha into a wide old wooden house, and served him, with appropriate Oriental apologies, to such a dinner as Nousret Pasha knew how to appreciate. For although it was becoming increasingly the fashion to dine *alla franca*, what Nousret Pasha really liked was to dine *alla turca*. He had sat too long on the floor to be quite comfortable in a chair. The steel and silver of a European table seemed to him so many impediments be-

tween good things and his enjoyment thereof. And he infinitely preferred a succulent dish of "The Imam Fainted" or "It Pleased The Man-Slayer" (i. e. the Sultan) to all their juiceless roasts and pastries. He had not lost his neck for nothing!

One feature of the dinner, it is true, was not altogether Turkish. Although a good Musselman, Nousret Pasha, to the knowledge of many, had acquired a taste for alcohol. Ahmed Bey, therefore, having discreetly hinted that there was wine in the house for medicinal purposes, and having received intimation that it was always well to forestall the disease by the remedy, produced bottles to which his guest did due honour. The host afterward asked himself if he had made a mistake. At all events, when the low table had been removed, and fingers and lips had been rinsed in a trickle of perfumed water that a servant poured from a slim silver jug into a silver basin with a perforated cover, Nousret Pasha had so little forgotten what he came for that he turned to his host and said:

"Ahmed Bey, we are becoming more and more modern as we grow old. Why should not your wife bring in the coffee?"

Ahmed Bey knew that the Sultan's milk-brother could go far. But he had not believed



the man would really go as far as this, in the house of one whose bread he had eaten.

"My Pasha," he replied gravely, "I am very sorry, but my wife is ill."

"Ahmed Bey," retorted Nousret Pasha, "it is not necessary to lie to me. Your wife is not ill. My wife has seen her—and so have I!"

Ahmed Bey swallowed the insult.

"My Pasha," he persisted, "it is some days since my wife had the honour to receive Madam Nousret Pasha. I swear to you that she is unable to come into this room."

The two eyed each other. Nousret Pasha felt it unnecessary to give too black a look, for the man was too much in his power. Still, the look of the beady eyes was not pleasant, nor the words that followed:

"Ahmed Bey, go and find your wife. And tell her to bring her lute. It is good to have a little music after dinner—and dancing."

To a European that might sound simple enough, for a European is proud to have his wife make music for other men, or even to dance for them. With the Turks, however, a woman may sing and dance for one man only. If she does it for others she belongs to the half world. Nousret Pasha had therefore made of Ahmed Bey the demand that a man may least accept with honour. Yet Ahmed Bey knew with

whom he had to deal, and how much depended on what passed between them. He knew, too, that Nousret Pasha had had wine. And, after all, Nousret Pasha was his guest.

"I have thought of music, my Pasha. There are girls and boys waiting. I will call them." He clapped his hands.

A servant entered. But before Ahmed Bey could give the order Nousret Pasha got up and thundered:

"Will you do what I said, or shall I go myself?"

For a second Ahmed Bey would have thrown himself on the man. But he was unarmed, and he knew that Nousret Pasha always carried a revolver and could use it better than any one. He probably would like nothing better than to use it now. And then what would be gained? Ahmed Bey signed for the servant to leave.

"I go, my Pasha," he replied at length. "Kindly have patience for a few moments." And, with a low salaam, he went out of the room.

For a time Nousret Pasha was sufficiently amused. It always amused him to make other people do what he wanted, especially when they did not want to. The dancers amused him, too. The boys amused him more than the girls, for they were more shameless in their dancing and

less like bad imitations of what he was presently to see. He already knew most of the troupe. They sang long melancholy songs, accompanying themselves with tambourines, while one boy played a pipe and another beat two little drums made out of earthen jars with skins stretched over their mouths. They danced long dances, the slow sensuous dances of the East, snapping their fingers over their heads and weaving their arms to and fro. The air, meanwhile, began to grow heavy with the perfume that burned in a brazier. When Nousret Pasha was pleased with the performers he gave them a gold piece in a glass of mastic. But he began to be impatient to see Madam Ahmed Bey dance, with that reddish hair falling around her white shoulders and her long eyes half shut.

He clapped his hands for a servant, who told him that Ahmed Bey was almost ready. Let the Pasha have a moment's more patience—and in the meantime take wine. The Pasha took wine. But it only increased his impatience, for he called the servant again and angrily sent word to Ahmed Bey to come whether he were ready or not.

It took Nousret Pasha some time to realize that he had been tricked. He was naturally slow of wit, and he was too used to tricking

other people to believe that they would dare to trick him. Only when he called his troop of dancers after him and explored the house did he take in what Ahmed Bey had done. The door of the harem was locked. Nousret Pasha battered it in, finding the rooms lighted and full of signs of recent occupation. But no one was there—not even a servant. He rushed down through the empty house to find Ali. The doors leading into the garden were all locked. And they were harder to batter through than the one upstairs. But Ali, roused by the noise, came out of the porter's lodge to help. He had seen no one leave, he said. He had been sitting with the doorkeeper and the Jew who brought the dancers, until a servant came to call the Albanian—who had not come back.

When the way was open the Pasha ran out into the garden, revolver in hand. A summer moon helped him in his search among the shrubbery—and the dancers who followed him. They looked like a troop of bacchantes, with their loose hair and gauzy costumes, as they played their motley hide-and-seek in the moonlight. Ali in the meantime bethought him of his horses. He found them in the stable, safely munching hay. There at least were creatures he could understand! From this and cognate reflections he was roused by further battering,

and the sound of his own name shouted from the bottom of the garden. He found the Pasha trying to break through a back gate, also locked.

"Help me, Ali!" he shouted. "We must catch them!"

"It will take us less time if we go around by the other door," pointed out Ali gravely. "And if there is any one to catch, are not the police more than we?"

Until then Nousret Pasha had been too furious to remember that he had at his command an elaborate secret machinery for catching people—and keeping them as long as he chose. But he would not leave the place till he had gone through the house once more. He rushed upstairs like a madman, opening doors, bursting into cupboards, tearing aside curtains. He began tearing them down, and shooting at windows and chandeliers. When his cartridges were gone he used the butt end of his revolver.

"Break! Break!" he shouted. "Leave nothing!"

His band of revellers needed no second invitation. They filled the house with the crash of glass and the splinter of wood, stopping only to posture indecently in front of a mirror before smashing it, to save some trophy from the general sack, and to empty Ahmed Bey's bot-



bles. And they ended by setting the place on fire. Those old Turkish houses only wait for a chance to burn—and too many lighted lamps were thrown on the floor of this one.

When the firemen came, hooting half-naked from the neighbouring villages, they found little of the house save a column of lurid smoke towering into the moonlight. Nousret Pasha brandished his revolver at them from the garden. His fantastic company sang and danced around him in the glare, their faces streaked and streaming, their clothes torn, their arms full of loot from the blazing house. The Jew who had brought them cringed in the arch of the gateway, half terrified at the uproar, half reassured by the all-powerful presence of Nousret Pasha. In the road outside, his face strangely lighted, stood Ali at the heads of his plunging horses, patting their quivering necks and talking to them as gently as he could amid the crackle and the screeching.

## V

Under ordinary circumstances the story would have had quite a different end. Ahmed Bey did not have much the start of Nousret Pasha, and Nousret Pasha had eyes and ears and hands everywhere. But it happened that the night which proved so eventful for Ahmed Bey and

Nousret Pasha proved no less eventful for their imperial master, Sultan Hamid. There was much galloping of horses through the usually quiet streets of Beshiktash under that summer moon. Ministers remained in anxious consultation long after midnight at Yıldız Palace. Telegrams flashed back and forth between that guarded hilltop and distant Salonica—telegrams fateful for the destiny of the House of Osman. When the reigning representative of it went at last to bed, it was half consciously, borne in the arms of his attendants, worn out as he was by rage and fatigue. And in the morning three lines of print appeared at the top of all the papers, announcing that the Constitution of 1876 had been reëstablished.

There were three excellent reasons why Nousret Pasha did not chance to see those three lines. In the first place he went to bed about the time the three lines came out, and he got up too late to think about morning papers. In the second place he believed himself to know much more than all the papers put together, who found out very little anyway and were allowed to publish less. In the third place, having spent his youth in the more interesting occupations of hunter, wrestler, and highwayman, he had never found time to acquire the black art of the pen. Or, if I must put it more plainly, this

great personage of a proud court could neither read nor write so much as his own name.

But even if the Sultan's milk-brother had been able to read those three lines, he would not have understood what they meant. He did not when he heard about them, as even he was not slow to do. He never did, in fact. Nevertheless it became apparent that something had unaccountably happened which he, the Sultan's chief spy, knew nothing about, and which spoiled the world, as he put it to Ali. The police, who had been so deferent when he first gave his orders with regard to Ahmed Bey, presently dropped the case. They even had the courage to intimate that Nousret Pasha himself might have something to answer for in the matter of Ahmed Bey. Other people, too, treated with as little respect, or actually cut, him whom they had been wont to salute with earth-sweeping salaams and kissings of the hand. It was the more puzzling because the Sultan still spoke kindly to him. He could not conceive why, if the Sultan continued to be his friend, others dared to show themselves less. The Sultan tried, not too successfully, to explain that it was because he, the Caliph of Islam and the Shadow of God upon Earth, could no longer do as he pleased. And he made Nousret Pasha a hand-

some present and advised him to get out of the country while he could.

In the end it was Ali who got Nousret Pasha away. When two such counsellors advised the same thing, how could he refuse? Moreover, crowds of rotten-heads marched around the streets day and night with flags and music and speeches, unprevented by anybody, to prove that the world was upside down. And one night a company of them threw stones at his windows, shouting "Brigand!" and "Spy!" and "Blood-drinker!" It had been much more amusing to hear Ahmed Bey's windows smash than his own, and those shouts were not pleasant to listen to at night. It was only when Ali went out and told them that Nousret Pasha had gone to Europe and that Madam Nousret Pasha was alone in the house, that they went away.

## VI

Going to Europe, however, proved not to be so easy as it sounded. Not that Nousret Pasha had the slightest desire to go to Europe. He despised Europe as heartily as he admired European clothes and European café-chantant performers. But Ali told him up and down that he must go, lest worse should happen than the stone throwing. Moreover, it seemed he could

not go as he was, or all his money would not be enough to buy him a ticket. It was almost more than Ali and Madam Nousret could do to persuade him to leave the house that very night, taking only money and papers and a little jewellery, and going out by the stable door to the house of a friend of Ali's. Ali in the meantime helped Madam Nousret Pasha to pack, and early in the morning drove her down to the Moudania boat in the yellow satin victoria, which he put on board with his mistress and her boxes and her black man. For she was going to retire for a time to the House of the Giraffe. Then Ali went back to his friend's house and dressed his master, to his master's vast disgust, in the costume of a wrestler, with baggy fawn-coloured breeches, and a short embroidered jacket of the same colour, and a huge silk girdle, and a red and yellow silk turban with the fringe hanging over one ear. It was in truth a costume which became Nousret Pasha much better than any other, and time had been when he wore it with pride. But it was with very little pride that he went out in it now, accompanied by Ali, who no longer wore his trim black livery, and two of Ali's friends. They all crowded into a common open carriage of the street, and they bought red badges of the Constitution, which they pinned on their sleeves, and they drove down to the



Bridge and right through Stamboul as if they were going to some wrestling match.

Nousret Pasha did not like it at first. He felt foolish and annoyed, and he thought every one was looking at him. No one seemed really to recognize him, though, which also piqued him a little. And the others said so many funny things and made him laugh so much that he finally quite enjoyed himself. Having driven through Stamboul, they drove on through Kazlî and Makri-kyöi and San Stefano to Floria, where is that grove of big trees on the edge of the sea. There they got out and ordered the coffee-house man to bring them matting to sit on, and water and coffee to drink, and all manner of things to eat, and they spent the pleasantest day imaginable under the trees, looking at the blue Marmora.

When night came and everybody began to go away, they went too. But instead of driving back to town they drove on, toward Küçük Chekmejeh, where Ali said they were to take the train that night for Europe. People always speak, in Constantinople, as if they lived on another continent. It was already dark when they came to the brow of a hill and saw the lights of Küçük Chekmejeh below them, and the reflection of a big star in the bay. Ali said that there was not much time to the train, and

he told the Pasha that if any one asked him who he was he was to say he was Mehmed, a wrestler, and that he was going to Adrianople for his trade. It was just as well, for after they got to the station and sat down in a coffee-house to wait for the train, two soldiers came up and looked at them, and asked who they were and where they came from and where they were going. Ali answered most of the questions, and the soldiers finally crossed over to the station. But Nousret Pasha didn't like it. He wasn't used to having people ask questions about him and watch him. It made him think, somehow or other, of Ahmed Bey—and of Madam Ahmed Bey. He wondered where they were, and how he was to find them now.

It was a clear still night, so still he could hear the crickets in the dark plains, and the lapping of the water on a little beach near by. Fishermen were there, busy over their boats, laughing in the darkness. He envied the fishermen. No one asked them who they were and where they were going.

"Kalolimnos! Kalolimnos!" one of them shouted. "Who is going to Kalolimnos? The steamer is starting!" Nousret Pasha heard the grating of a keel over shingle, splashings in the water. He got up. For Kalolimnos is an island off the cape where he was born.

"Come, Ali," he said, turning toward the beach, "I am not going to Adrianople. I am going to Kalolimnos. From there it is only two hours to our country."

In the station a bell of two notes struck, and somewhere in the darkness a whistle faintly shrilled. Ali hurried after his master.

"Come!" he whispered, catching hold of the Pasha's arm. "The train is here. After all this, how can we miss it?"

"If you like, take it," answered the Pasha, breaking away. "I will not. What shall I do in Europe among the unbelievers? I am going to my country." And he jumped aboard the fishing boat. "I am going to Kalolimnos," he said to the fishermen. "How much do you want?"

"Ali!" called one of their companions from the coffee-house. "Where are you? The train is coming."

Ali, on the beach, heard it coming. It suddenly burst out of the cut beyond the village and bore down upon them, a long curve of intermittent lights. It stopped. In the sudden quiet Ali heard the water lapping the shingle, the quick crunch of gravel under feet, a musical tapping of metal, sharp questions and answers. The inquisitive soldiers were suddenly made visible by the light that came from an open window. A bell rang, ending in two strokes.

"Eh?" queried Ali, looking up at the Pasha. The Pasha was watching, too.

"Eh!" he answered. "Good-bye!"

Ali held out his hand to the Pasha, who caught it.

"Quick! Come!" said Ali in a low voice, pulling toward the beach.

"No, you come!" laughed the Pasha, pulling with all his might toward the boat.

Another bell rang, ending in three strokes. A whistle blew shrilly. Some one shouted and some one else replied. The intermittent lights began to move slowly forward.

"Are you coming, too?" asked one of the fishermen.

"Yes," answered Ali shortly.

He watched the chain of lights touch face and tree and water, quicken into a yellow blur, and dwindle into the darkness. There seemed to him something derisive in the last scream of the whistle. He said nothing, however—except to make arrangements with the fishermen. They were not too curious about their unexpected passengers. There is a good deal of such travel in the Marmora, and they took Nousret Pasha for what he seemed. When they heard that the wrestler was really bound for the peninsula beyond Kalolimnos they suggested landing him there—for a small extra

consideration. Ali agreed readily enough. That would attract less attention.

As for the Pasha, he felt more himself than he had done for days. He found it very comfortable on the little stern deck of the boat, with the matting and sheepskins of the fishermen. He slept soundly there, oblivious to the splash of the oars, the rising of the moon, and his heavy-hearted companion. When he woke up the sun was already high and they were skimming merrily along under a patched balloon sail. The low white hills of Kalolimnos were behind them, to the south. Beyond the sail he saw the steep green of his country.

They landed on the north side of Boz Bouroun, the weathered gray nose that was sacred of old to Poseidon. From it they made their way without difficulty over the rocks and through the woods they knew so well, toward a certain colony of great black cypresses. And Nousret Pasha's heart grew lighter with every step. But when he came to the last turn of the road and looked eagerly for his house, no house was there. Only the trees and the head of the giraffe showed above the wall.

## VII

Nousret Pasha and Ali looked at each other. The same thing flashed into the mind of each—



that the house had burned down, as the gypsy had prophesied. And that was not all the gypsy had prophesied.

As a matter of fact, the house had burned down. It had so recently burned down that the garden was full of the acrid odour of charred wood, and the air still quivered hot above the ruins. Among them old Moustafa was poking with a stick—the Pasha's gardener and caretaker. At the sound of steps he turned. At first he did not recognize the strangers. Then he came humbly forward, salaamed, and kissed his master's hand, touching it to his forehead.

"What is this?" demanded the Pasha, with a return of his old air.

"They burned it," replied Moustafa, his hands folded in front of him.

"They burned it! Who burned it? And why did you let them burn it?"

"What could I do?" stammered the old man. "They were many. They came from the village—— There was much talk—— The world is upside down since every one speaks of—constitution, monstitution, what do I know? But it was written, my Pasha," he added, as if there were nothing more to be said.

Yes, it was written, the Pasha told himself. And why had he let that train leave him last night? By this time he would have been in

Europe, and safe. The consciousness of it was stronger than his anger.

"And the things?" he asked, less roughly. "What became of them?" The smell and ruin of the place made him think of Emirgyan.

The old man waved his hand:

"Gone! They took them all—furniture, horses, dogs. Only that is left"—pointing to the giraffe that lifted its neck among the scorched trees. "They even took the silk carriage that the *hanîm* brought last night. The *Kaïmakam* has it."

"And the *hanîm*?" inquired the Pasha, only then reminded of his unfortunate wife. He wondered a little that he listened to it all so quietly.

"She went back to Moudania, they said. I didn't see her. Some thought she was going to Broussa, and others to Stamboul."

Nousret Pasha's heart grew heavy within him. His country, indeed! He had never imagined that the sudden madness of the world would reach even here. And his countrymen had done this to him, whom they had always known, who had chosen to return to them when he might have gone to Europe! After all, what had he done to them? If he had taken a few presents and kissed a few girls, wasn't it what they all did when they got a chance? And had

they had enough, or was it written that they must require something more of him? His beady eyes brooded dully on the giraffe.

As for Ali, if he as well felt heavy of heart, he did not betray it.

"Is the kiosque left," he asked, "or did they burn that, too?"

"No," answered Moustafa. "They left that for me."

"Eh, what more do we want!" exclaimed Ali. "Let us go and sit down there, and Moustafa will make us a coffee, and we will see what we will do."

They went, and they sat down on a little divan overlooking the blue Gulf, and they saw what they would do. At least Ali did. He told the Pasha that he must stay quietly in the kiosque for a day or two, without so much as showing his nose outside the garden. Moustafa would look after him and see that no one troubled him, while he, Ali, would go away and arrange something. Only the Pasha must let him have money, much money. For without money it would be impossible to arrange anything, now.

The Pasha made haste to produce the money. He only wished Ali did not have to go away. When Ali had gone away he fell into a state of something nearer a confused introspection than

he had ever experienced before. In this kiosque, where he had passed so many pleasant hours, it was strange to find himself again, a fugitive. How had it all come about, and why had everybody turned against him? It made him angry. It seemed to him that Ahmed Bey must have brought it about—that Ahmed Bey who was nothing. Where was Ahmed Bey? he wondered. Where had they run to that night in the moonlight? What were those long eyes looking at now? He would see them again, those long eyes! Just let them wait! Yet, for the first time in his life, he felt afraid. No one knew better than he how easy it was to watch people, and catch them. The world had suddenly gone upside down: what if people really wanted to catch him? What would they do to him? There were so many things to do! He could not forget that gypsy woman. He could not bear to see the ruins of the house. They reminded him of her. And it seemed to him an eternity before Ali came back. With cigarettes and coffee, however, and gossip with old Moustafa, and a good deal of sleep, the time passed.

## VIII

It was less than three days, after all, when Ali came back. He had been to town, it seemed, and he brought strange news. All their old

friends at the Palace were gone and the Sultan was left alone among strangers. Selim Pasha and Izzet Pasha—that clever Izzet—had run away to Europe. The others, or those who could be found, were being shut up in the War Office; and these new people, whoever they were, were taking their money and houses. They had even taken what they could find of Nousret Pasha's!

By the time Nousret Pasha heard this, he was quite ready to hear what Ali had arranged. Ali was still for Europe, it seemed. By the help of a friend or two, and much money, he had arranged that a German steamer, bound from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, should stop for a little while, that very night, off the island of Marmora. In the meantime a tug, by which in fact Ali had run down from Stamboul, was to come at nightfall as far as the House of the Giraffe and take off Nousret Pasha, in order to put him on the German steamer. The tug was to be trailing a tender, with men in it all ready to row. They would begin to row as soon as they saw certain lights in the window of the kiosque, and the passenger would only have to run down across the beach to be in safety. But until then they must continue to stay quietly in the kiosque. And he, Ali, would try to make up a little sleep.

In truth he looked as if he needed it. He had



grown visibly thin and there were black hollows under his eyes. Yet the Pasha noted with envy that he had had a shave. The Pasha himself had had none since the afternoon before his windows had been smashed. Nevertheless the return of Ali dissipated the Pasha's vapours. At this time to-morrow he would be on board the German steamer! No fear of his refusing, this time, to do what Ali said. It might be rather amusing, after all, to go to Europe. He wondered if he would meet any of his old friends there. If not there were sure to be new ones. There might even be some one on the boat. . . . But this absurd costume of his! And his four days' beard! What would he not give to be able to go to the bath in the village! Who would know him? Certainly none of the bath boys: they changed so often. For a moment he almost thought he would go. Then he decided that he would send Moustafa to call a barber. Moustafa could say that he had a friend who had hurt his foot, and they would give the man a good tip, and by the time he got back to the village it would be too late to do any harm, even if he did talk.

Old Moustafa could not deny the cogency of this reasoning, nor the fact that the Pasha was Ali's master as well as his own—which the Pasha did not fail to point out when Moustafa

objected that Ali had told him not to leave the place. Moustafa wished Ali were not asleep. Yet it seemed a pity to wake him up, when he looked so tired. To the village accordingly old Moustafa trudged, and got the nearest barber, who happened to be a Greek and who took pains to leave word where he had gone. So Nousret Pasha was made in a manner presentable to the daughters of Europe, despite the unworthy wrestler's costume. And so was the gypsy woman justified of her dark words.

It may be, indeed, that Nousret Pasha's vanity might not have been his end, even when word was taken to the *Kaïmakam* that the Greek barber, having been called to the House of the Giraffe—or what was left of it—was unable to attend His Excellency. For His Excellency also patronized the Greek barber, as being one quicker to adopt innovations in the tonsorial art, not to say one who might more readily be left unpaid, than one of the faith. But the mention of the House of the Giraffe reminded His Excellency of a certain yellow satin victoria he had lately confiscated on behalf of the Constitution. He desired to be well with the Constitution, this *Kaïmakam*, and had made no unpleasantness about the burning of the House of the Giraffe. Accordingly, unshaven as he was, he took a drive in the yellow

satin victoria—to the no small discomfort of his provisional coachman, who knew well enough how to whip a pony of the country but who had never seen a spirited Hungarian horse before in his life, much less a pair of them. Nevertheless the spirited Hungarians drew the yellow satin victoria without mishap, in the cool of the day, to the end of the peninsula, where the *Kaïmakam*, to his no small surprise, beheld a small tug anchored in a cove of rocks. The spectacle of that small tug, swimming like a toy in the blue cove, with a toy dinghey behind her, caused the *Kaïmakam* considerably to think. The times were uncertain, he knew. Certain of those in great place were being removed therefrom and others were removing themselves, expeditiously and secretly. How could a *Kaïmakam* of an obscure peninsula better appease that mysterious being, the Constitution, than by making, under due military escort, a personal examination of the country place of a notorious spy of the old régime?

He caught Nousret Pasha without the slightest trouble. He took the precaution to post his men out of sight, and they drew up as twilight fell. The thing was not done, of course, without a few shots. The shots frightened the tug away, however, and nobody was hurt. As for Nousret Pasha, who had such a terrible repu-

tation, he did nothing. He merely said, "It was written," and got into the yellow satin victoria like a lamb. The *Kaïmakam* got in too, and a couple of soldiers. The *Kaïmakam* would have let the servants go—after all, they were not to blame for what their master did—but Ali chose to consider himself under arrest as well. He jumped on to the box, and the yellow satin victoria rolled back to the village in the summer dusk.

## IX

The *Kaïmakam* drove straight to the telegraph office. He wished to report his prize to Constantinople, and incidentally to ask instructions. For he had no authority to shut up Nousret Pasha, who might very well have committed all the crimes in the code but against whom no one had produced a warrant of arrest. To the telegraph office, then, the *Kaïmakam* drove, and left Nousret Pasha under guard in the victoria while he composed his telegram.

A crowd began to collect in the little square. A crowd collected around the carriage, that is, for people had already been sitting where the coffee-house lights twinkled under the huge plane trees. The *Kaïmakam's* new carriage and horses were things to look at by themselves. When it became known who was sitting in the carriage, dressed like a wrestler as of old, the

crowd trebled. Among them were not a few who had helped to loot and burn the House of the Giraffe. They were a little silent at first, when they so unexpectedly saw in their midst the redoubtable Nousret Pasha himself, sitting in his famous yellow satin victoria. But as the story of his capture went around there began to be more talk and more freedom. People asked questions of the soldiers and the coachman—of Ali too, whom several of his old acquaintances gravely greeted.

The coachman nudged one of the soldiers and asked him to hold the reins for a minute. The soldier willingly enough agreed. He was cramped from sitting on that little front seat, and there was no lack of people to watch Nousret Pasha. So the coachman got down. His arms ached from holding those big Hungarians. And the soldier got up. Ali scanned him in the dark. He seemed to be a big, mild, elderly Anatolian, such as used to serve Sultan Hamid by the thousand, in ragged blue uniforms piped with red, and seldom got paid for it.

"Brother, have you any tobacco?" asked Ali.

"A little," answered the soldier, producing one of those capacious metal boxes that somebody in Turkey must make a fortune out of.



Ali rolled himself a cigarette with deliberation. When he handed back the box the soldier nearly dropped it, the thing was so heavy. He looked at Ali and Ali looked at him.

"That will get you some more tobacco," said Ali in a low voice. "Give me the reins and jump down."

The soldier hesitated. He felt cautiously under the cover of the box. It was full of coins—five piastre pieces, by the size. Or could they be gold *liras*? He let Ali take the reins. Ali touched the other soldier, behind him, on the arm.

"Will you change places with your comrade?" he asked. "He is not used to horses like these."

The big Hungarians reared and began to back. The soldier on the box jumped down. The other looked around doubtfully. The horses still pranced. The crowd parted a little.

"They might make a calamity," said the first soldier.

The one in the carriage got out, none too briskly, in order to mount the box.

"Hold on!" shouted Ali, to whomever had ears to hear, letting out the reins and cracking his whip. The big horses bounded forward, scattering the crowd in front of them like sheep.

"Stop them! Stop them!" yelled the *Kaïma-*

*kam* from the steps of the telegraph office. He had just composed a telegram that satisfied him not a little.

But it was too late to stop them—unless the shots that banged in the little square had taken effect. None of them did. It was not for nothing that Ali had been born and brought up in that village. He knew every stone and tree and turn of it in the dark, and in three minutes he was past every possible mishap, on a long flat road where nothing could stop them, in that railless and motorless country—except the telegraph. And they need not go where the telegraph did.

Where were they going, though? At first Ali hardly knew what direction he took, save the one that was nearest for safety. Now he realized that they were galloping east, for the mainland, for Anatolia. That was better than the tip of the peninsula, where they would have been caught like rats in a trap—unless they found a boat. But the telegraph, in the end, could gallop faster than the big Hungarians. And it would never do to gallop through Asia Minor in that notorious yellow satin victoria.

Nousret Pasha had resigned himself, when the soldiers first surprised him, to the inevitable. But spirit came back to him as he found himself rolling safely away through the dark

—though there was still something cold at the bottom of his heart, and he wished the horses' hoofs did not thunder so. He reached forward, now and then, and pinched or patted Ali. What a boy, after all, was this Ali! When Ali pulled in the horses to a trot, however, the Pasha protested. Ali had to point out that the horses could not gallop forever. They would get farther, now that there was no immediate danger, by going a little slower.

So the fugitives sped all night through the dim country of their boyhood. On one side of them the sea made soft noises against rocks and shingle. On the other side a mountain rose black to the stars. Dogs barked from invisible farms. After a time the moon rose—the same moon by which they had made their voyage in the fishing boat, by which they had danced in Ahmed Bey's garden, by which Ahmed Bey had run away: the same moon, but shrunk and eaten. Nousret Pasha wondered how reddish hair would look by it, and if, somewhere, those strange long eyes were seeing it too. And now it made the road into Asia a little lighter for the big Hungarians, and for the faithful coachman who drove them, and for the fat man sitting behind them in the coquettish satin carriage, half grotesque, half tragic, trying to outrun his destiny.

## X

The cocks were almost past crowing, and Olympus, on the other side of the Gulf, was already touched by a fairy light, when they came to a village in the hills where Ali knew there was no telegraph. There they could be safe for a little while, at least, and they must rest and feed the horses. Then they would make one more stage inland, and get rid of that tell-tale turnout as they could. After that——

They drove to the *khan*, in order to stir up less suspicion, and roused a hostler. The proprietor whom Ali knew had gone; but his successor was willing to accept a handsome tip, to stable the horses, to put the carriage under cover, to believe that his clients were driving from Yalova to Broussa, and to give them a room where they might rest.

Nousret Pasha, having eaten something, rested very well. Ali could not. He could not think, even. After a while he got up from his mattress and sat at the window. It looked into the street and into part of the opposite garden, beyond which a wide green country dropped into the blue of the Gulf. How cool and like a paradise it seemed in the early sun! And where in all that paradise could he find a place to hide this foolish master who snored behind him?

How could they help being caught, in the end? Why, after all, should they try to escape? What was written was written. But his heart grew heavy to think he must yet accomplish what was written.

It was written that he should not have to wait very long. As he sat pondering his ways and watching the sun mount higher over the green and blue below him, he became aware of some one moving in the garden across the street. It was a woman, and evidently no peasant, in a loose gray dress with a white veil over her hair. She was walking down a path trellised with grapevines. Then she turned into an open space of grass where pomegranate trees stood in blossom. She suddenly looked up at the window, as if conscious that some one saw her. And Ali became aware that she was Madam Ahmed Bey. She at once drew her veil across her face and stepped out of sight below the wall.

Did she recognize him too? How should she? Yet if she did— Ali hesitated but a moment. Glancing at his prostrate master, he went out softly and asked whether he could hire any horses. The *khanji* said none were to be had at that hour: they were all out for the day, and he doubted whether any could be found elsewhere in the village. Ali ordered, accordingly, that



his own be harnessed at once. If the *khanji* thought anything, he said nothing. Wrestlers did not usually travel all night, as this one had done, in silk carriages, and then rest barely two hours before travelling again. But since this affair of the Constitution everything was upside down.

The carriage was presently ready, with fodder for beast and man, and Ali roused his master. Nousret Pasha came very unwillingly to consciousness. But Ali looked so grave he asked no question and made no remonstrance. They went downstairs, they paid their bill, they took their respective places in the victoria. The hostler threw open the doors of the court to let them out.

As the horses clattered through the archway Nousret Pasha saw Ahmed Bey on the other side of the street. For an instant a commotion seized him and he looked beyond Ahmed Bey, searching the lattices of the house. But the commotion subsided, and it turned into the coldness of last night when Ahmed Bey caught hold of a bridle.

"Nousret Pasha, are you running away?" demanded Ahmed Bey loudly.

Nousret Pasha's coldness began to be warmed by anger.

"Ali, whip him!" he commanded.

Ali, however, did not whip him. He whipped the horses instead. And this time there was no crowd, as yet, in front of them. But they did not break away. Doors and windows began to open. People came out of the *khan*. Peasants stopped in the street.

“Nousret Pasha——”

Ali lashed the tired horses. The whole village would know in an instant, if Ahmed Bey went on bawling that name. As a matter of fact the name began to be repeated in the street. It was a name the village knew for a name of rumour and of terror. But Ali could not turn the horses into the straightaway stretch, because of Ahmed Bey who turned them back. And though Ahmed Bey was his master's enemy, Ali did not wish to hurt him. Between the two of them the horses began to plunge.

Then Nousret Pasha stood up, reached across the box, snatched the whip out of Ali's hand, and lunged at Ahmed Bey. Ahmed Bey drew back. The horses leaped forward.

Suddenly a woman's voice sounded strangely from behind a lattice.

“Musselmans!” cried the voice. “This is Nousret Pasha, the spy of Sultan Hamid, the drinker of blood, the destroyer of souls! Will you let him go?”

They did not let him go.

How do such things happen? Some thrill in that invisible woman's voice, some buried fury against wrongs too long endured, some spark of those that flash from man to man when many are together, set on fire in those gathered peasants a wildness that lies dormant in us all. Ali, sitting on his box above it, trying to manage his terrified horses, heard the whistle of the whip that had been wrested from him, and fierce shouts, and a crash of stones, and sickening thuds, and gasps of quick breath, and his own name cried in mad fear, and other sounds inhuman and unnameable.

The tumult sprang up and quieted like a blast of tropic wind. In that utter quiet was something that made Ali cold. It made him think, too, of the gypsy woman. When at last he could look around he turned pale. The satin of the carriage was more red than yellow, and what remained in it was very little of a man. To that man had happened what happened of old to the bears he caught in the mountains, when he set dogs on them, at his House of the Giraffe. And so was fulfilled the destiny of that house, and of its master.

## THE GOLDEN JAVELIN

*For my part, in the presence of a young girl I always become convinced that the dreams of sentiment—like the consoling mysteries of Faith—are invincible; that it is never, never reason which governs men and women.*

—Joseph Conrad: CHANCE.

I DON'T wonder you want to steal it. Did you ever see anything so perfect as that little spiral relief of bay leaves? And you would be still more rapacious if you knew where it came from. But I shall hold on to it as long as I hold on to anything, and then it's going to the Seraglio Museum. I suppose our trotting over there this morning, and our gossip about old times, must have been too much for me, because I really have no business to tell you. At any rate, you may pick up some crumbs for your monograph. That isn't the real interest, though—for me, at least. I'm not scientific enough to be an archæologist, much as that sort of thing takes my imagination. What catches me is the human in it all. And in this case the two——

However, do you remember my cousin Per-

sis? Yes, she always was a rather uncommon girl—from the time she began to fill a large and respectable circle of relatives with anguish by the quality of her promise to end in a circus. She rode like a jockey, you know, and she would as soon have executed the *tourbillon de la mort* as a figure in the german. So when she went out to Sidon as a missionary we had only breath enough left to gasp “I told you so.” Being the last thing in the world that any one expected, it was the most natural for her to do. You are not to suppose, however, that the outcries we made were simply owing to the fact that we objected to having virtue break out in our midst. That was bad enough, of course. Few skeletons in a family closet are so trying to confess to as a missionary. But you may recollect that, among other things, she was the best company in the world. She even had a trick of making plain domestic life more amusing than most week-ends.

You must make your own allowances, though, because I am free to confess that when Persis announced to what use she intended to put her youth and looks and general rarity, no outcries were louder or more lamentable than mine. She was, to be sure, my cousin, but even a cousin may be worth cultivating. At least I found it so the first time I went home on leave. And I



always admire the banality of the occasions of things in this world when I recall that of my discovery. It was at an entertainment given—I believe in my own honour—by Aunt Jo, who, in common with other hostesses I have known, persisted in regarding my preference of silence to conversation in company as evidence of bashfulness. She therefore tore Persis from a circle of cavaliers in the hope of drawing me into sociability, and the first remark of this reluctant young person somehow put her for me in a light.

“Mother says I must come over and talk to you,” she sighed; “but I can’t think of anything to say. Can you?”

It happened that I could. Indeed, as time went on I thought of more than Persis was willing to listen to. She would then cheerfully assure me that one adult idiot was insufferable enough, without a whole tribe of little ones. Or, when I went about exploding the superstition that consanguinity was a bar to wedlock, she would complain that she needed a little room for the imagination, whereas I allowed her none: she always knew what I was going to say before I opened my mouth. This shot was the more telling because just what made my case so desperate was that when Persis opened her mouth no one knew what she would say.

Of course there are swarms of breezy girls about, and once in a while they have a touch of *naïveté* that isn't mere pose. But you don't often come across one with anything at once so simple and so remote under her outer liveliness. I suppose that is partly why Persis's final reason for her hardness of heart sounds so silly. She always declared that she should fall in love with some one quite different from anybody she or I had ever seen. She couldn't describe him, but she would know him the instant he appeared. And the amusing part of it was that although I made immense fun of Prince Diadem, as I nicknamed him, and did my best to convince her that I was that mysterious being in disguise, I somehow knew my labour lost.

We had, nevertheless, for a certain time, an extremely agreeable relation. For a good deal of what Persis took away with one hand she gave back with the other. It pleased her to say that while other members of her extensive *entourage* were far more companionable, none were so adept—to quote her own elegant phrase—at getting out what bothered her inside. Be that as it may, it was given me more than once to be edified to the limit of edification, as they say in the Arabian Nights, by my vivacious cousin's histories.

None, however, was so moving—I might even

give it a quicker adjective—as the last of all. It came to me after her death, in a small sealed parcel, by the hand of the elderly missionary whom Persis had married in Syria. I naturally regarded this gentleman with extreme curiosity. He was a grave and grizzled individual, by no means an Apollo to look upon, with a thick round beard and an odd accent. I presume the habit of another language had affected his pronunciation of his own. What struck me most about him was his fresh, his almost infantile, complexion. He had the colour that monks occasionally have. I wondered if it denoted in him what had attracted Persis, because he didn't strike me otherwise as being in the least extraordinary. On the contrary, there was something I didn't like at all in his references to her. I won't pretend, though, that the fact didn't give me a certain evil satisfaction. While Persis never was much of a hand with her pen—isn't it curious how often the vividest personalities lack that power of expressing themselves?—I was quite unprepared for the silence that fell between us after her arrival in this part of the world. Out of it came to me only the news of her marriage and death, and the knowledge that she left no children. And I took it, bitterly enough, for the measure of the completeness with which she had fulfilled

her high destiny. But the sharer of it curiously disappointed me. Persis had been, for me, so rare a type that it hurt me to prove her fine anticipations no more than those of any school-girl. I even asked myself—perhaps there, too, my vanity was touched—whether I had been mistaken in her.

I found an unexpected answer in the parcel which Mr. Hoyt delivered to me. He said that Persis had asked him, shortly before she died, to give it into my own hands. That, and the fact that I became conscious of his eyeing me as curiously as I did him, made me refuse him the satisfaction of opening the parcel in his presence. From it, after he had gone away, I unwrapped a small sandalwood box, not more than ten or twelve inches long. The box, which I was at some pains to get into, contained a tight roll of paper. As I began to loosen it there fell out from between the leaves—they were covered, to my surprise, with Persis's crooked writing—a smaller roll of purple silk. A human enough curiosity made me look at that first; and I found, folded in the silk, this miniature spear. The sight of its soft antique gold and the perfume of the sandalwood affected me with the strangest sense of remote things. They did not affect me so strangely, however, as Persis's letter. And it was not merely the special com-

bination of circumstances. Otherwise I could hardly bring myself to communicate, even to you, what was so purely personal. As it is, I shall ask you not to say anything till I get through reading.

“ . . . You must have wondered why I have never written to you all this time. You couldn't know, of course, how often I have written. Only I have always been too proud to send the letters, or I had no right to, or I couldn't make them say what I wanted. But there are reasons why I want you to get this—sometime.

“There would be the one that I owe it to you, if there were no others. You have been more to me than you know. I didn't know it myself till I began to find out how much depends for our own development on the people we happen to be thrown with. It was just because you were so much to me that you were not everything. I mean that what in you was different from the other people I knew called out what in me made it impossible for me to marry you. So, in a funny little ironical way, you are bound up with all that has happened to me. Will you understand it, I wonder? You used to understand so many things that the rest of them didn't. And somehow I never could get them out—the things, not the people!—unless you



were there. That's another reason why I'm writing to you now. I've lived so long by myself, sometimes not knowing what was happening to me, and then not being able to tell it, that I must get this out if I can. But how I wish I had you solidly here, instead of the ghost of you! It would make me feel less as if I lived altogether in a world of ghosts. And you remember that I could never do anything with a pen but bite it.

"I hardly know where to begin with all I want to tell you. It's so long since I've told you anything, and things have such a way of beginning before one knows it. Were you aware that you first put the idea of Sidon into my head? Of course there were other ideas there for it to work with. One of them was a revolt against the theory that a girl should sit at home and spin. I was bored, and I could see nothing but cotillions for myself to the end of the chapter. As a career it didn't seem to lead to anything, except favouring one of the dancers with my hand. And you know the reason, the real reason, I used to give you for not marrying you. Well, I wanted to give myself a better chance. And I thought sincerer people could be found outside ballrooms than in them. So I came here.

"I smile to this day when I think how beau-

tifully simple it was. I knew no more about the religion I came to teach than I did about the one I came to supplant. I hadn't even a shadow of what people call religious conviction. I had always taken everything of that sort for granted. I imagined that all you had to do was to speak reasonably to the heathen for him quickly to renounce the error of his way. I was quite as ignorant in other directions. I didn't learn until I was six thousand miles from home that *il mondo è paese*, as the Italians say; that there are insincere and foolish missionaries as there are honest and human cotillon leaders, and that there are Mohammedans a good deal less in need of conversion than many who contribute to have them converted. But when I began to find these things out—— I wouldn't want to go through that time again. I never needed you so much. I was too proud to tell you, though. That was why I stopped writing. And that was all that kept me from going back home. I was too proud to confess that I had made a mistake. But now it is all over I regret nothing. I probably could never have learned my lesson in any other way. If I haven't been a missionary with conviction I have at least found that so long as pain and misunderstanding are in the world there will be enough for me to do without raising questions of creed. And

then if I hadn't come—— But that is what I'm trying to tell you.

"I say I do not regret. The one thing I regret is the unhappiness I have caused to one who had a right to expect happiness of me. Will you understand if I tell you quite simply what I have often been on the edge of telling you, that Mr. Hoyt was the last man in the world I ever would have dreamed of marrying? You know the idea I used to have. I don't know whether all girls have it so distinctly. At any rate, the face I was always trying to picture to myself, that I more or less unblushingly came to look for—I found it among these good people as little as any of the other things I expected. So I put that illusion away with the rest of them. I concluded that it might be something of an art to take life as it came, to build what one could out of one's mistakes. I accordingly agreed to marry Mr. Hoyt. He was as good and as honest a man as I was likely to come across, and he knew perfectly well that I had no passion for him. That was to be my reparation for thinking that girls should not sit at home and spin. And I had a real curiosity, after all my high-flown ideas, to play out the game to the end and fulfil the common lot of womankind. I thought that must be the supreme relation, with life itself, in all its variety and indiffer-

ence, instead of with one person. But—let me try to tell you.

“We were married very soon, without any fuss. That is one of the things I most like out here—the freedom from fuss. We did make a journey afterward, but that, too, was different from what it would have been at home. We took our ordinary touring paraphernalia—you can hardly have lived so long over here without learning that we ‘tour’—and started on horse-back down the coast. We planned to avoid ‘out-stations’ as much as possible, and to do some of the sightseeing that we had never had time for. This desolate old Phœnician country gave me a dreadful sinking of the heart when I first saw it. And it came to seem to me, with all its flatness and its ruins of other times, merely a dismal counterpart of my own life. But in the end it began to tell me a different story.

“Our first camp was at a place where some tombs had been found a few months before. This is such an out-of-the-way part of the world that no proper attention had been paid to them, and there were rumours of things that had been stolen or destroyed. Our tents were ready for us when we arrived, in a charming sheltered hollow near the sea. And our man had a piece of news for us. It seemed that the owner of

the adjoining vineyard, while starting to dig a reservoir, had discovered a mysterious door in the rock. It might be the entrance to another tomb, but no one could open it. The proprietor had tried, and the soldiers had tried, and they were all on the point of cutting each other's throats about it. You know how little love is lost between Arabs and Turks.

"I don't know whether you are interested enough in that sort of thing to have heard about the affair. You and I never talked archæology in the old days! But the archæological world never had the truth of the matter, or more than a part of it. Of course Mr. Hoyt himself is not an archæologist, and the reports were so contradictory that the real archæologists never could straighten them out. Besides which they were too much occupied with questions of identity to trouble themselves about anything else. So I can only tell you everything as it happened, without minding how much you may or may not have heard before.

"The place was finally opened, you know, with blasting powder. We heard them at it while we were eating supper. And we didn't wonder when we saw the door. It was a kind of immense wheel of stone, fitting into grooves at the base of a rocky ledge and offering no kind of hold. We couldn't imagine how it was ever put



there. There were other things to speculate about, however, for the door opened upon a sort of chamber or passage, cut out of the solid rock. We found it full of Bedouins and soldiers and smoky lights, crowded excitedly toward the inner end, where there was another door. This was a doorway rather, filled in with masonry and surrounded by a highly polished egg-and-arrow border. And above it, cut also in the rock, was an inscription which the owner told us was in some strange language no one could read. But when he had the men stand back and held up a torch for us to see it Mr. Hoyt recognized some Greek writing which he afterward translated like this:

“ ‘Have reverence, O comer in the night, for the house of the dead. Turn, turn away, while it yet is time. It is not for such as thou to break the sleep of kings. For so shall the peace that remembers neither pain nor woe cease to scatter its shadow on thine own eyes. Thou shalt behold no more the sweet light of thy country. The voices of men thou shalt not hear, but only the beasts of the desert whose mouths are avid with vengeance, or the cruel lashing of the sea upon the rocks. And thou who mightest choose a happier lot, thou shalt prefer the enmity of the all-seeing gods. Turn, then, turn away, while it yet is time. It

is not for such as thou to break the sleep of kings.'

"I didn't wonder that the men were visibly moved as Mr. Hoyt spelled it out to them. In that dark rock chamber, above the Tyrian sea, with its flaring lights and its ancient inscription and its mysterious walled door, one could believe anything ghostly or incredible. But the feeling between the two parties soon rose again in them more strongly than any other. So it was not long before they picked a hole in the masonry. When it was about wide enough for a cat to squeeze through they sent a boy, a most unwilling one, in to scout. He squeezed back almost immediately, reporting nothing very definite except that it was wet inside. But his bare feet were flaked with gold-leaf.

"You can imagine how much that did to quiet the excitement. The proprietor insisted more than ever upon his right to his own property, while the officer in command of the soldiers declared he was there to prevent the government from being robbed. I don't know what might not have happened if we hadn't been there. As it was, they took our advice to wait till the next day before doing anything else. It seemed they thought we had the more right to be heard because there must be some relationship between infidels who could read the strange

inscription and the infidels who had put it there! But seeing that each side was still distrustful of the other, we said we would keep watch with them. Which we accordingly did. We established ourselves with rugs and cushions at the entrance to the tomb, with Turkish and Arab sentinels picketed on each side of us.

"There was no moon, but there was that starlight which is only of the south—a light of great mild liquid summer stars, hanging so near us, so near, in a sky that velvet is too stuffy a word to describe. Not far away the sea was, at the foot of the grassy plateau of olives, facing the ledge. We could make it out dimly between the trees by the rippling reflections of the stars, and the darkness was full of its lapping. The only other sound we could hear was the far-away bark of a jackal, or once in a while the soft whirr of a bat. I remember, too, how strange the olive-trees looked, ancient and twisted beyond any I ever saw. The phantoms moving vaguely between them only made them more so. They were Bedouins and soldiers, I suppose, hoping that we would fall asleep or go to our tent. But I never felt less like it. I never had so realized before that night is the true time of this country, when everything that is forbidding about it disappears. I had never

so realized the country itself. The purple of Tyre, the light of Greece, the gold of Rome, the strange work of the nomads—I had found them here as little as most people find the beauty of faded tapestry or a Byzantine mosaic. Its desolation spoke to me at last, however—a desolation as different from the wildness of America as that is from the order of Europe. All the passion and tragedy of centuries seem to have gone into it. There is something old and wise and sad about it, after which other countries look as pretty and empty as children. But to whom do I write!

“I suppose the time and the place had a good deal to do with making that night so memorable to me. But you remember, too, what night it was. Have you ever felt a kind of mortified surprise to find how humdrum life is in the making? It always makes me think of when I broke through the ice once, ages ago, and how I thought as I went down that something had really happened to me at last, and how astonished I was to find it so prosaic, and to be chiefly conscious of how I might have prevented it. Well, my wedding affected me in just the same way. After all I had gone through to make up my mind to it, I wondered how it could possibly leave me just the same as before. That night, however, something really did happen to me.

Sitting there in the starlight under those old olive-trees, listening to the ancient voice of the sea, I saw the rôle I had chosen in cold blood with a sudden intensity of feeling that amounted almost to passion. I saw life dissolve and reform under my fingers in a way that made me believe that my husband might be, after all, the veiled image of my dream.

“Before we knew it the sea began to whiten under our eyes. After that it wasn’t long before the owner of the vineyard appeared with his workmen, followed by the Turkish officer and some more soldiers. They lost no time in setting to work with their picks at the inner door of the tomb. We sat watching them in a silence, or I did, which I suppose was a part of my mood of exaltation. But the sound of the picks was portentous. One could not help thinking of the inscription over the door. Yet the very fact that we should desecrate the place, parvenus from the newest of countries as we were, gave me such a strange dream-like picture of the world as I saw the dawn brighten between the olive-trees, rare and exquisite as it had been hundreds and hundreds of years before, when this place was first hewn out and—— And what? That question as to what we were to find grew into a suspense that overpowered everything else. Even the men stood still a



moment when they had widened the hole enough to get through.

"The first thing I saw was a great carved sarcophagus, extraordinarily huge and white in the gloom. Then as our candles caught one point and another it came over me that the gloom was of gold. Did you ever really see gold—enough of it, I mean? The tomb was completely sheathed in plates of gold—floor, walls, ceiling—that gave out the strangest warm lustre as the men moved about with their lights. And in the middle of it all, behind the sarcophagus nearest the door, stood seven others, all shadowy white and all set about with gleaming gold things, just as they had been left centuries before—except that water had worked its way into the vault and had loosened the leaf from some of the plates. You have probably seen them yourself, the sarcophagi, in the Stamboul Museum. But you will never see them as we did. Least of all the great one we saw first. They say it is of a decadent period, and stolen into the bargain. However that may be, there was something frightening about its beauty when we first broke in upon it, with its reliefs representing a combat between Greeks and barbarians, and all its exquisite decorative details. And then each uplifted hand held a little gold javelin, and each chlamys, faintly painted with

red or purple or green, was fastened at the shoulder with a tiny jewelled buckle. You should have seen them glitter in the candle-light, against the polished marble!

"I can't begin to give you an idea of the magnificence of that mortuary chamber. It affected me to a degree that I can neither describe nor account for. Without knowing anything about them, I have always loved beautiful things. And here were beautiful things come upon under circumstances that made their beauty something unearthly. The jagged hole through which we had come, where I could see a bent olive and the far-away morning shine of the sea, only emphasized it. When Mr. Hoyt pointed out to me a figure of the principal sarcophagus, a young man on horseback, holding a spear longer than the others, decorated with a design of bay leaves, I couldn't bear it any longer. The only thing I wanted was to be alone. I burst out crying and ran away to my tent.

"What with sitting up all night and the various excitements I had gone through, I suppose I must have been tired out. At any rate, I slept for ten hours without stirring. When I woke up, late in the afternoon, I hardly knew where I was. I couldn't imagine, either, why Mr. Hoyt should be sitting familiarly by my bed, reading the *Missionary Herald*. Then I remembered.

And I felt once more as I did that time I went through the ice. I wondered how, after having been so wrought up, I could be so indifferent, and find it so characteristic of Mr. Hoyt that although he had slept much less than I he should not have gone back to the tomb. He was perfectly willing to go when I proposed it, however—on condition we should first have tea.

“We hardly recognized the tomb when we got there. It had been stripped of its gold sheathing, all the vases and other portable things in it had been carried away, and the little spears and buckles had been picked off the great sarcophagus. They had even pried up its cover, in the hope of finding further booty, and in doing so had contrived to break off some of the rams’ heads of its cornice. The Turkish officer politely explained that the governor had ordered the things to be removed to his house for safekeeping until some one should come down from Constantinople to take them in charge. But I never heard that any of them ever turned up at the Seraglio, and it struck me that there was something suspicious in the amicable terms at which the rival parties had apparently arrived. They made haste to cover their confusion, however, if they felt any, and our own manifest horror, by telling us of a further discovery they had just made.

"I had noticed an aromatic perfume that I didn't remember as being there before. And when the officer pointed to the open sarcophagus and placed a stool where I could look into it, I was conscious at first only of that aromatic odour, which was stranger than anything of the kind I had ever known. Then I began to make out in the darkness below me the figure of a young man. At the moment I didn't notice what the reflection of my candle showed me later, that his body was immersed in a clear pale-amber liquid. I merely saw him lying there in the shadow of the marble, so beautiful and so life-like that he might have been Endymion asleep.

"The thing was incredible enough in itself. I needn't tell you how incredible it was to look bodily into a face that had seen so different a world from ours. But I was scarcely conscious of that—still less of any wonder as to the identity of the young prince who had been buried there with such splendour. On the contrary, I had the most amazing shock of recognition. I thought at first it was because of his resemblance to the figure carved outside the sarcophagus—so slowly do our thoughts travel behind the darker parts of consciousness. But then I knew, with an intensity of conviction that left me faint, that—— Oh, I don't know how to

put it. Every-day words don't seem to do for things that were so far from every day. How can I tell you, as I would tell you about the weather, that—that the face of the sarcophagus was the face I had always been looking for, that until a few months before I had always been sure I should find? But it was so—it was so. Every drop of blood in me told me it was so. And when in the first tremor of my knowledge I looked up and saw on the other side of the sarcophagus the face of the man who was my husband, I knew only more hopelessly it was so.

“Perhaps I am mad, as poor Mr. Hoyt thinks. I don't know. I only know that I never could look at him again as other than a stranger. Of course I have ways of putting it to myself—that illusions are not illusions unless you believe them so—that I never really saw my husband or myself until I looked into that sarcophagus. But I often wonder if it isn't true that strange dark things move inside of us, that urge us, in spite of ourselves, to ends we don't know. I have sensations sometimes of belonging to another world, of communicating in inexplicable ways. I often look at the good simple normal people about me and wonder what they would think if they knew, if they really knew. Sometimes I envy them, too; but I'm afraid I've



oftener had a sort of contempt for their poor muffled lives. The whole affair has given me such a sense of the irony of things that if I hadn't also gained a growing sense of the pity and the passing of things I don't quite know what would have become of me here. But I have been happy, too—if there is such a thing. It so invariably seems to involve unhappiness, and it is so little the end of life. I have had an almost fierce happiness in my secret, and I have had the bitter happiness which is to know. Perhaps, after all, I have proved that the supreme relation *is* with life itself.

“Oh well, words—what have they ever told in the world? But you can see how all my currents have necessarily turned in, and how I need some one to know and understand. And then I want to send you this little javelin. It was brought to me long afterward by a jeweller in Beïrout, who said he had bought it from a soldier. Can you understand my dishonesty in not sending it to the Museum? I couldn't—I couldn't. It was my only link—— My husband has never seen it, and I don't want him to after I am dead. He—you know. So I wish you would take it to the Museum and put it back into the hand of the figure you will find. I would like him to have it again. And it will be another link.

“You know he saved himself—the young prince. I don’t know whether it was the contact of the air or the evaporation of the liquor or what, but he saved himself. He stayed only long enough for me to find him, after they had broken into his golden room. When they came to take him away he was gone. And I shall go, and you will go, and only the sarcophagus will remain, and the one little javelin that I have had so long, and no one will know. Dreams—dreams——”

## HIS BEATITUDE

*It takes three Jews to cheat a Greek, and three Greeks to cheat an Armenian.*

—LEVANTINE PROVERB.

### I

WERE mine a high and moving tale, I might announce my hero by saying that on a certain August morning a man of striking appearance was seen to make his way down that crowded street of Galata which opens to the Bridge. As it is, I can only point out that such an announcement would apply with equal exactness to several thousand individuals, and that while one of them did happen to be concerned with the present narrative, he would have been the last to catch a curious eye. He was merely a well-dressed, well-made and not ill-looking young Armenian, with less of the Semite in his face than his people often show. That he was a person of the better sort was evident from his gold-tipped cigarette holder, from the portentous length of his little finger nail, and from the modish cane which he

swung in palpable ease of heart. But for the frivolity of the word I might say that he tripped along, so light-footed was the gait with which he passed the white-smocked toll-keeper and started to cross the Bridge. Presently, however, he stayed his steps, to approach one of the peddlers who stood along the railing. And in the extremely unattractive assortment of pins, needles, hooks, eyes, buttons and bodkins displayed upon a tray by this individual he proceeded to rummage.

"Have you seen the paper this morning?" inquired the pedler in Armenian, as if conversation with this fine young man were more to him than commerce.

"I have seen the paper, Minas," replied the fine young man. His own name, I might inform you, was Arakel—and you are to accent it, like those of his friends, on the last syllable.

"Well?"

"Well! It says what it says every day—that he is dying."

"Holy saints!" exclaimed the pedler. "If——"

At that moment a second customer arrived and began to fumble in company with Arakel. The young man thereupon withdrew from the field.

"I don't find anything," he said, fixing Minas with his eye; "I am going over to the other side."

The pedler, a powerful fellow with the flat head, the narrow brow, and the hooked nose of his race, kept him in disappointed view until he was lost in the crowd. As for Arakel, he lost nothing of his careless pace. Threading his way through the motley multitude he passed in turn the landings of the various steamer companies which have termini at the Bridge. Before reaching the Stamboul end, however, he found occasion to approach another pedler.

"How is business, Levon?" he asked, fingering the shoestrings which hung in a great sheaf from the man's arm.

"Would I be here if there were business?" demanded the pedler. "I watch until I am blind, and never a soul do I see. I don't believe he exists."

"He must exist!" laughed Arakel. "He shall exist! And you will see him better if you stand a little farther over—there, where the people spread out more after leaving the steamers."

"Well, perhaps he does exist," grumbled Levon as he changed his post. "But that does us no good if he hasn't the sense to come in time."

"He must have the sense! He shall have the sense!" laughed Arakel again, patting the other's shoulder. "And if he hasn't, why—we



have enough to manage it in spite of him. Good-bye. I'll see you to-night if not before."

With which our fine young man moved away. He did not move, however, in the direction one would have expected him to take. Instead of proceeding to Stamboul he retraced his steps toward Galata. And then again he performed the unexpected. He went down the first stairway leading to the landing of the *Mahsousseh* boats, walked to the café commanding the view of both approaches, and established himself at a table whose waiter greeted him as a habitué. Although he was promptly provided with coffee and paper, neither seemed much to occupy him. Indeed, neither could have occupied him for so long as he stayed. What seemed to interest him was watching the people as they passed—people going to and coming from the steamers. What was a little curious about it, though, was that he did not watch like a mere spectator. He did not allow his eye to be caught, to follow a figure until it disappeared, and then to wander idly back. He seemed to watch with an idea. He let no face escape him. Sometimes he leaned out of his chair for a better view of one that was partly hidden. But he did not scrutinize. He did not hesitate. There was no uncertainty about it. It was like one who turns over a pack of cards looking for the joker.

## II

Why it was that Arakel chose as his coign of observation that particular café of that particular landing could scarcely have been told by an outsider to his idea. Those asthmatic steamers, wreckage of prouder days upon the Danube and the Thames, which ply on broken wing between the city, the Princes' Islands, and the sunny Gulf of Nicomedia—why were they more to his purpose than the swift ferries of the Bosphorus? But that there was matter to his idea was proven at the end of the morning on which we make his acquaintance. For suddenly leaving his seat he made after some one in the stream of passengers issuing from the Prinkipo boat.

This was an old man—the most wonderful, the most beautiful old man whom one could possibly imagine. From his dress it would have been difficult to make him out—which indeed Arakel found. It was not exactly clerical, yet it was not quite secular; though it was wholly plain and worn. The old man might have been a priest somehow sunken to the care of his family, or he might have been the gardener of a monastery. But the white hair covering his shoulders, the white beard falling to his waist, gave him an air of the patriarchal which was

indescribably sweetened by a gentleness of eye and smile. If it was possible for him to be more perfect, his great height made him so. In short, as I have said, he was the most wonderful old man imaginable.

Arakel followed him a moment, ascertained that he was alone, saw him hesitate between the two exits to the Bridge. Then he stepped forward and made a profound salute.

"Good morning, father," he said. "Give me God's blessing."

The old man offered no reply, but he made a gesture half of appeal and half of deprecation.

Arakel increased at once the amenity of his regard and the keenness of his observation. The eyes, the nose, the hands—everything was right. It is only your dilettante, however, who sticks unquailing to his generalizations. Your expert will never be dumbfounded to find his Armenian turn out a Jew or even a Greek. Still, our young man ventured:

"Have you far to go?"

The old man sighed.

"I do not know," he answered—in Armenian.

"Ah—it is a hot morning. Do me the honour to come into this café and take a coffee with me." The amenity of Arakel became unction.

Again saying nothing, the old man allowed himself to be led to one of the little tables.

There he sat, alike inscrutable in his silence and in his benignity. The fragrance of the smoking *zarfs*, however, when the waiter set them down, seemed to touch him to expression.

"Son," he said, "you are good. There—there—they were not good." He made a vague motion with his hand.

"On the island?" suggested Arakel.

"Yes," replied the old man. "On the island."

So far, so good. But Arakel wondered.

"Where was the house?" he asked.

"Oh—far," said the old man. "Far. And up—there were the pines, and down—there was the sea. Far, yes. And they were not good. There was only the little Marie. But she went away. And then I went, too—far."

To which Arakel quickly made answer:

"Father, come to-night to me. I am alone in the world. I have nothing but an empty house, a solitary garden. Let us share them together!"

An ordinary old man would have betrayed some excess of emotion, of curiosity, of repugnance. This old man had none. He merely smiled and said:

"Son, you are good."

And then he gave himself as in a dream to contemplation of the spectacle which his companion had hitherto found so engrossing. The latter, however, had now other ideas in mind.

After a certain interval he said "Come," and taking the old man's arm he led the way to the main level of the Bridge. They made a curious couple as they walked toward the Stamboul side—the shabby old man and the smart young one. But they were not more curious than many another pair that stumbled across that hot highway; nor, perhaps, was their errand so strange as that of the first man to whom they might have spoken.

Yet they did speak to a man—or Arakel did. It was indeed to Levon, the vendor of shoe-strings, whom we have already seen. This personage was apparently more interested in the companion than in the patronage of Arakel. For it was the latter who, after fingering at his leisure in the sheaf of laces, spoke first.

"So I have found," he said, "exactly what I wanted. They told me it didn't exist, but I told them it did!"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Levon, coming back with a start: "These!" and he pulled out a pair of laces. He could not, however, keep his eyes off the old man.

That gentle person, unmoved by the flow of the bizarre world about him, smiled without eagerness and without ennui. Levon shifted under it, and Arakel, with his superior knowledge, smiled as well.



"Yes," he said, "those. And now I am going home. When you have found what you want, why stay out longer? And then, too, it is better not to let too many people see. You might lose it."

With which he led the way to the landing of the Bosphorus boats.

### III

If the solitary garden to which Arakel had referred was made less solitary by the arrival of an inmate, it must be said that, on the other hand, the number of habitués at the Bridge was diminished by three. But it is likely enough that the addition made more difference in the one than did the decrease to the other. Since the days of the Pasha who had loved his narrow strip of hillside enough to flatten his house into a long corridor against the rising slope, I think no one had so appreciated that terrace of many trees as our old man. He continued to have no words. He merely smiled, as if his heart were full of patience and peace. So Arakel, while treating him with unfailing deference, soon left him to wander by himself under the tragic cedars of Lebanon and the cheerful copper beeches which the Pasha had taught to live in strange conjunction before the rambling house.

It was not long before the old man found

what the Pasha had known when he created this little paradise—that the most wonderful thing about it was the view. There was a certain rose arbour on the edge of the terrace where he would spend the long hot days, looking down as from a box at the play, upon the most romantic scene in the world. This was a bit of the Bosphorus, framed between a round crenelated tower and a steep stairway of red roofs. From the lane at the bottom of the terrace wall the hill fell away so suddenly that the wonderful sweep of blue lay almost under the old man's eyes. The colour of it alone was better than breakfast. But it was constantly overshoot by things of passage: by great steamers hurrying on the business of the Black Sea; by the side-wheelers of the Bosphorus, with their prodigies of smoke and foam; by sailing ships of the strangest build, that might have come from Colchis and Iolcos—and probably did; by the light caïques slipping merrily down the Devil's Current or laboriously making their way against it. And the Lost Souls! I do not know how they figure in the Debretts of Science, those fleet sea-swallows; but they forever skimmed up and down like clouds on the surface of the water, as if they filled the darker part in the purpose of the play.

All these things made a ceaseless web of cir-

cumstance on the shining blue floor between the ivied tower and the stair of climbing roofs, and the old man spent his days in watching. Smiling alone in his arbour on the hill, as if everything were wonderful to him, one could not have told whether he ever thought of his island, and of the people who were not good, and of the pines that were up and the sea that was down. One could not even have told which of the changing panoramas of the day he found most wonderful. It might have been the early morning piece, when everything was so limpid that the water-side palace in the green background of Asian hills was cut of pearl. It might have been the late afternoon piece, when in the magic of a hidden sun the same palace burned with opaline fire. It might have been the night piece, when there was nothing to hear in the silence but the rush of the Devil's Current and when, out of the vague shadow beyond, a faint carcanet of lights glimmered—like gold beads in the dusk. To him it was all wonderful.

There did come a day, however, when something was more wonderful than anything else. I have spoken of a lane that skirted the retaining wall of the garden. There street vendors would pass on their way from one village to another, prodding their donkeys through the

sun and crying picturesque cries. Or sheep would tumble by, panting between a small boy and a large dog. Or sometimes people of more leisurely sort would stroll past and would raise their eyes upon the hanging masonry to where the white old man sat in his arbour above the world. And he would smile at them, so that the blackest of them could not help smiling back. At best, though, it was no better than a deserted by-way. So that when one morning at the end of the summer a child capered up in her white dress and white bonnet, followed by a somewhat breathless nurse, it was something new to look at and smile at. And even before the old man's train of association could rise to consciousness she piped:

"Ai! Ai! Ai! When did you come?"

The old man gave a start.

"The little Marie!" he cried. "Come!"

"You come!" she shrilled. "You come! The wall is too high! Jump!"

She stood on tiptoe below him, with her little arms in the air.

The old man rose as if he intended to do what the child said. Then, after standing at the edge of the parapet, looking down, he walked back and forth in his trouble.

"The little Marie! The little Marie!" he kept repeating.

Just then Arakel appeared on the walk leading from the house.

"Have you lost something, father?" he asked. "Can I help you?"

"Yes," said the old man. "The little Marie!" And he pointed down to the lane.

"Come! Come!" screamed the child below the wall, in her eagerness.

Hearing her, Arakel remained where he stood.

"Who is that?" he inquired, with more of sharpness than he had ever shown before.

"The little Marie," answered the old man. "She calls."

"Ah!" And Arakel remembered the island. Then he said firmly: "Come into the house, please, father."

"But—the little Marie!" faltered the old man.

"Yes, I know," smiled Arakel. "Come!"

The old man turned and waved his hand.

"I am coming!" he said. "Wait, little Marie!"

But the little Marie waited in vain.

#### IV

That night there came at the door a great ring which raised slow-dying echoes in the sleeping house. Arakel sent back to bed the cowering servant who fumbled at an upper case-ment, and went down himself. Apparently, however, he was not without expectation of



some such visit. For to the man whom he let in he uttered merely:

“Well?”

“He is dead at last!” announced the other. “I saw him myself an hour ago, lying high among his vestments and candles, like a rag on a rose-bush.”

“It was time!” commented Arakel. “When will they bury him?”

“Soon,” replied Minas. “It is summer, you know.”

“Then the appointment will be soon,” said Arakel. “I began to think we had picked a plum for a peach. If this old——”

A look from Minas made him turn around. There in a doorway stood the old man, white and strange in his disordered array. He stared confusedly, blinking a little at the candle held by Arakel.

“What are you doing here?” demanded that personage with considerable sternness.

“I heard the bell—I don’t sleep, you know—I am old—I have seen many things. They come and go before my eyes—so.” He waved his hand before his face. “I heard the bell—— I thought—— The little Marie——”

Arakel met this silently. Then he went to the old man, took his hand, knelt, and said slowly, looking up into his faded eyes:

"No. It is not the little Marie. It is this gentleman, Baron Minas. He is come to tell us that His Beatitude the Patriarch Hampartsoun is dead, and that you have been chosen to take his place."

"Dead?" uttered the old man, looking about uncertainly. "I—— Dead?"

"No, father," replied Arakel, solemnly kissing the hand he held. "It is you who are now Patriarch of Constantinople."

Upon which he rose and made a sign to Minas. The latter knelt in turn before the old man, kissed his unwilling hand, and said:

"Your Beatitude, give me the blessing of God."

The old man blinked again in the candle-light.

"I—I think—I will go to bed," he stammered.

At this Minas rose hastily and turned away. Arakel, however, immediately spoke:

"That is right, your Beatitude. You must rest while you can, for weary days await us."

## V

There was truth in what Arakel had said. He announced that they would have now to move into town, and a change came upon the house on the hill. The long rooms, bare as they were, were quickly made barer still; the halls were made impassable by boxes; the very garden was

despoiled. The old man saw his little world dismantled under his eyes—its peace shattered by the fury of hammers and porters, its comfort buried in the depths of packing-cases. But the days were not many before Arakel decreed that it was time to go.

If the old man was bewildered by the fatiguing strangeness of these events, he still found it possible to smile—albeit somewhat wanly. And when the last moment came, the sharpness of it was turned by the novelty of what happened. For he was dressed in a long black robe with flowing sleeves, upon his head was set the brimless pointed cylinder of the Armenian Church, about his neck was hung a chain of gold, and over his shrunken finger was slipped a great ring. Then a sedan chair was brought, and four sturdy porters carried him lightly away. He made a wonderful figure as they went down the breakneck cobblestones to the water—the stately old man in his black and white and gold. And perhaps a certain childish consciousness of it, an excitement of new impressions, made it easier for him to leave the garden and the arbour. At all events it was a great thing to get into the three-oared caïque that waited at the bottom of the hill, to be at last a part of the busy play which he had watched so long from afar. The presence of a

stranger in the boat, whom Arakel called Levon, awed him a little at first. But he soon forgot everything in the pleasure of slipping down the Bosphorus on mid-current, with the gardened hills on each side running by like pictures in a dream.

The dream came to an end at Top Haneh, where they swung inshore. There two victorias were waiting on the quay, and a brilliant red-and-gold *kavass* came ceremoniously forward to help them from the boat. Perhaps it was because he recognized the visitant of some nights before that the old man made less of having his hand kissed. But he was accustomed now to marvels, so that when he was put alone in the first carriage, with Minas on the box, he merely wore his patient smile as of old. Then the little cortège climbed the long hill to the Grande Rue de Péra, and clattered splendidly to the door of an establishment not far from Galata Seraï.

The old man and the door-boy had each a moment for admiration. The old man had never seen anything so magnificent as the emblazonments—to him perfectly unintelligible—that covered the great windows: “Christaki Frères, Orfèvrerie et Joaillerie, Fournisseurs de S.M.I. le Sultan.” As for the door-boy, he was accustomed to equipages as smart, and he had a particular salaam for certain diaphanous bun-

dles of beauty that came in behind the Palace eunuchs; but he now decided that here was a new occasion for that salaam. So when the *kavass* held the carriage door and Arakel offered the old man his arm, the boy threw open his domain with an unction never to be surpassed. And perhaps his respect was only deepened by Minas's cold refusal, after Levon had humbly followed the others, to entertain any relation whatsoever.

It must not be supposed that the Christaki Frères were oblivious to what was going on at their door. Indeed, one of them who happened at that moment to be there, glided forward to meet these correct personages, and immediately conducted them into his small private cabinet. It had the air of a large jewel box, being completely lined with red velvet. Arakel, after the old man had been solemnly seated in a big armchair and Levon had assumed the post of inferiority near the door, confidentially approached Monsieur Christaki and bestowed upon him a visiting card of portentous size.

"I have the honour," he said, "to accompany His Beatitude Innocent I, the new Armenian Patriarch."

Monsieur Christaki bowed so low as almost to sweep the carpet with his forelock, and insisted



upon kissing the Patriarchal hand. Which in a Greek was indeed significant of an admirable tolerance, for he could not be supposed to entertain the deepest respect for the head of a schismatic faith. Arakel then drew him apart and laid before him the object of their call.

"Before giving an order," he said, "I must particularly request that you maintain perfect silence about anything which we may ask you to do. I should let you know that we have selected your house simply because we judged that your discretion would be quite equal to your resources, taste, and skill."

Monsieur Christaki intimated that he was profoundly sensible of the honour conferred upon his house, and that he would rather suffer bankruptcy a thousand times than give occasion for shaking such confidence. Arakel then went on:

"In assuming the affairs of the Patriarchate His Beatitude has made a painful discovery. He has found that the treasury has been ransacked, that certain objects are missing, and that from the most valuable of our antique regalia the stones are"—Arakel lowered his voice—"gone! Whether it happened during the lifetime of the late Patriarch, or during the interregnum ensuing upon his death, there has been no time, it may never be possible, to deter-

mine. But His Beatitude is to be installed within the month, and, naturally, he is gravely concerned for the honour of the church should these losses become known." At this they both glanced toward the old man, who was diffusing in the small bright place the benediction of his smile. "Accordingly he proposes," continued Arakel, "to make good the loss as best he can out of his private means. Fortunately they are—adequate."

Again Monsieur Christaki glanced at the old man, this time in greater admiration than before.

"What noble self-sacrifice!" he exclaimed.

"Eh, these men of the church!" smiled Arakel. "They, unlike ourselves, think only of laying up treasures in heaven!"

"You may count upon our discretion!" declared Monsieur Christaki feelingly. "Will it be—a—goldsmith's work that you will require, or jewellery?"

"Chiefly jewellery," replied Arakel. "A considerable number of unset gems. And the work, you understand, will have to be done in His Beatitude's apartments, under his own supervision. With despatch also. We shall wish to begin to-morrow morning. What we will do now will be to select the stones from which the losses may be repaired. Of course you will have

ample security to cover their value until the work is done and the price paid."

"*Par exemple!*" burst out Monsieur Christaki. "Do not mention security before that face!" He waved his hand toward the wonderful old man. "What is it you wish to see? Diamonds? Rubies? Emeralds? Everything?" And in the assenting smile of Arakel he approached one of the red velvet walls, which proved to conceal the door of a safe. After opening this he drew up before His Beatitude a small table, upon which were laid in succession many trays and cases of glittering things.

It was Arakel who made most of the selection, describing as he did so the priceless relics of Byzantine and even of earlier times which had been so ruthlessly abstracted or defaced. His Beatitude, however, was frequently appealed to, and was skilfully made to exercise his choice among the shining treasure scattered before him. The decision, it must be said, usually rested upon the more visible of the precious objects displayed, and never failed to elicit from Monsieur Christaki the warmest eulogies upon His Beatitude's taste. So at last a prodigious number of little boxes were set aside.

"Now," said Arakel, "to show how business-like we can be in the church!" But after start-

ing to unbutton his frock coat he suddenly put his hand to his hair, looking first at His Beatitude and then at the jeweller. "I meant to stop at the bank first, but I forgot it. We have just come, you know, from our audience at the Sublime Porte."

"My dear sir!" cried the jeweller, "do you insult me? Here! Take your jewels! Go!"

He was quite purple with protest.

Arakel laughed.

"Be careful!" he said. "We might take you at your word. But I have it. I would ask you to send some one with us, but I am afraid His Beatitude is a little fatigued after his hard day. So if he will excuse me a moment and if you will permit him to rest here until I return, I think I will step around to the bank. Levon, call the *kavass*." Turning back to the jeweller he added: 'A priceless servant! It may save you a little uneasiness if we take them now.'

Monsieur Christaki scorned to consider His Beatitude in the light of security.

"The bank will be there another day!" he said. "If His Beatitude wishes to return home at once——"

"On the contrary," put in Arakel at once, "I am sure His Beatitude would prefer a moment of repose. If you could let him lie down here until——"

"Certainly! Certainly!" cried the jeweller. "If he will deign to endure our meagre accommodations!"

And he pulled forward the billowy red velvet couch. Upon this His Beatitude, divested of the uncomfortable head-dress, was laid unmurmuring. As a matter of fact he was fatigued after his hard day, and his eyes closed a moment in the contentment of relaxation. The four—for Levon had come back with Minas—regarded in silence the extraordinary picture he made. Then Arakel turned to the jeweller:

"I commend him to you, Monsieur Christaki. You will find him of a tractability!"

At this the old man opened his eyes.

"Son," he asked, "do you go?"

"Yes, father," answered Arakel, "I go. But sleep until I come. Good-bye."

The old man smiled, a little wearily. They looked at him for another moment of silence. Then they left him alone.

## VI

His Beatitude came slowly to consciousness with the impression of being under alien eyes. He had been dreaming, and the little red room was as strange to him as the countenance of Monsieur Christaki.

"I beg His Beatitude's pardon if I have dis-



turbed him!" uttered that worthy with an anxious smile. "The coachman wishes to know—— He is still waiting—— The other coachman has brought a message which I do not quite understand—— May I accompany you to the Patriarchate?"

"The Patriarchate?" asked the old man vaguely.

"Yes. The coachman doesn't seem to be sure where he was to take you. You have taken possession, have you not?"

The old man held a brief inner examination. Then he announced judicially:

"Son, I do not know."

"You don't know!" cried the uneasy jeweller. "Why, where did you start from this afternoon?"

His Beatitude considered a moment.

"With Baron Arakel," he replied, and he looked around him as if to discover the whereabouts of that personage.

"No, he is not here!" exclaimed the jeweller. "He said he would be back in twenty minutes, and he has been gone three hours. But where did he bring you from this afternoon?"

Again His Beatitude considered.

"It was up," he answered, lifting his hand. "Up on the hill. Below was water. And I saw the little Marie!" he added triumphantly.

"The little Marie!" burst out the distracted jeweller. "I thought it was the Grand Vizier. Excuse me a moment while I speak to the coachman."

Bowing himself out he hurried to the door. It was as he said. The other coachman had returned and seemed to be having some discussion with the one who had waited.

"Look at me!" called the jeweller imperiously.

Both men turned.

"Where did you bring these *effendis* from this afternoon?"

"From Top Haneh, *Effendim*," they answered in concert.

"Top Haneh, eh? And what street?"

"From the quay," they chorused again. "They came in a boat."

"In a boat!" The jeweller's heart became as lead within him. But he looked at the newcomer. "And where did you drive the three young ones from here? The two and the *kavass*?"

"First they said the Ottoman Bank," replied the man, "but then they changed their minds and told me to drive down to the Galata Quay——"

"The quay!" cried Monsieur Christaki, turning pale.

"Yes. They said they had to catch a steamer."

"A steamer!" almost shrieked the jeweller.

"What steamer?"

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"Who knows? There are a thousand. They went out in a *sandal*. They told the boatman to row for his soul. But they threw me back a *lira*!" Rising a moment he reached into his pocket and held up the glittering gold piece with a grin. "I just happened to pass, and Mahmoud here told me that he hasn't got his yet."

"A-a-ah!" uttered the jeweller slowly, between his teeth. Then he wheeled in a flash. "If I don't tear out by the root every hair of that goat's beard of his!" he cried. And he ran back like a tiger into the little red cabinet where lay His Beatitude.

## THE PLACE OF MARTYRS

*The secret of the stars,—gravitation.*

*The secret of the earth,—layers of rock.*

*The secret of the soil,—to receive seed.*

*The secret of the seed,—the germ.*

*The secret of man,—the sower.*

*The secret of woman,—the soil.*

*My secret: Under a mound that you shall never find.*

—Edgar Lee Masters: SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY.

### I

SENTIMENTAL, sentimental, my dear lady! It's grossly sentimental, and it isn't much of a story anyhow. Mine never are, you know. They're only notes for other people to make stories out of. And you mustn't think that it has anything to do, except by accident, with the name of the place.

The place was named for the first Turkish skirmishers who fell in the conquest. It's quite a place, though, isn't it? Of course there are plenty of higher hilltops, looking down on broader lands and bluer seas. But there are not many so picturesquely furnished with ragged cypresses and grey old turbaned stones, from which you may behold two continents

staring at each other so melodramatically. And I, for one, am acquainted with no hilltop that gives out quite so intricate a sense of life—of all the different kinds of people that have lived in the world, of all the fatalities and transformations that have befallen them, of the strange singleness in their destinies, and the strange impossibility that they should ever quite die out. Up there is Giant's Mountain, where Jason had such a bad time with King Amycus, and which the Turks have turned into the grave of no less a personage than Joshua the son of Nun. Down there are the hills where Hannibal was buried. I wonder whether it would be anything to him to know that the castle under our feet was built by a terrible young man who battered down what was left of the Roman Empire. A Greek temple of Hermes stood there once.

Then that bare brown country behind us—— They talk about the Roman *campagna*. I remember two young men in a compartment talking about it one afternoon as we rumbled out of the valley of Umbria. "*E' magnifica, ma melanconica*," observed the one. "Also the sea renders melancholy," declared the other: "It is the infinite, the unattainable." Yet I don't know why I should laugh at them for being so much more eloquent than two young Americans would have been—except that the Roman *cam-*



*pagna*, after this one, always seems to me so small and mild, a sort of happy hunting ground for painters and paper-chasers. It was meant to put in a gold frame and hang in a drawing-room. You can't put this *campagna* into a gold frame. It's too big and too melancholy. Too many horsemen have trampled its fields, cut down its woods, burned its houses, left it each more desolate than the last. But all the horsemen of Europe and Asia never quite trampled out some stubborn virtue that persists in it still, that proves itself in chosen lights, at changes of the year. And there are lost slopes and hollows where, among remnants of races and struggling patches of green, the old drama of the earth goes obscurely on. There! Didn't I tell you I was going to be sentimental?

The day I discovered the place, though, I didn't trouble myself much about remnants of races or melancholy *campagnas*. I had ridden up here on one of those mornings we get oftener with a south wind than otherwise—when the sky and the Bosphorus have the light in them they ought to have if the Black Sea were not at our backs. You know that clear, soft, coloured, swimming light. I can't describe it, but it's the light in which Greece and Italy grew up. There's something irresistibly pagan about it. It always makes me forget that anybody but

Jason and Byzas and Xenophon ever had any business here. So when I started to look for a road into that ravine behind us, and stumbled on those white stones you see at the edge of the slope, beyond the threshing floor, I had a momentary impression of—what shall I say without being sentimental or callous? Those stones are the Armenian cemetery of the village down by the castle, and they made an incongruous note in a pagan morning. The Armenians have always been for me the least sympathetic of the races here. They have neither the history nor the physical appearance that attract one to some disinherited peoples, and their centuries of servitude have left not the happiest traces in their character. Then those neglected graves scattered on that burnt slope, unguarded by wall or rail, unshaded by so much as a scrub oak, cut off from sight of house or sea—they were like a sudden chill in that lighted summer sunshine.

However, I left it behind me, leading my horse down a sort of rocky trough that was evidently a watercourse in time of rain. The high banks on either side were overgrown with scrub oak and bay and those ragged blue flowers with jointed stems, whose name I never remember. Chicory, is it? The trail dropped into a wider one at the bottom of the ravine, where there was

a trickle of water. There were also blackberry bushes in a tangle of honeysuckle and wild rose, and trees of some size. It was a pleasant place on a warm June morning. But I found a pleasanter one in the hollow just beyond, where three ravines met. A big oak tree stood there, shading one bank of the brook. The other bank was the steep side of a hill, out of which from a small brick archway bubbled a spring. Branches of bay and linden hung above it, ferns grew in their shadow, sage-roses dotted the green. You would never have expected so delightful a spot in so burnt up a country. I tied my horse and sat down under the big oak. This time there was nothing to jar on my mood. There wasn't a house to see or a voice to hear. There were only the trickle of the water, the talk of the birds, the movement of the leaves, the shimmer of the steep slopes in the pagan light. On top of one of them a cypress tapered darkly into the luminous sky.

As I sat there, the only piece of incongruity, smoking cigarettes and taking in with the sweetness and coolness of the place the sense of that old Greek earth, I became aware of some one looking at me through the leaves of the opposite bank. It might have been a faun, tutelary to the pool or in search of its guardian nymph. At all events, he was a remarkably

good-looking faun. He reminded me of a certain little Renaissance bronze, with low-growing curls and a pleasure-loving nose, that beats his cymbals in the Bargello at Florence. If it were a nymph he was looking for, I knew she was as good as lost, because his eyes were the most faun-like part of him—of a brown in which warmth and wildness were most perilously mixed. For myself, I was more occupied with his ears, trying to make out in the shadow if they were properly pointed. He obligingly assisted my investigations by jumping down the bank and asking me in Greek if I had a cigarette. That might have broken the spell, for who ever heard of fauns smoking—to whatever other forms of enjoyment they may have been addicted? Moreover, sculpture does not present them in ragged blue shirts and nondescript trousers tied in at the waist by an apology for a white girdle. But the faun had so engaging a smile, he displayed such white teeth, his carriage was at once so lithe and so proud, that I could only find him more faun-like than ever. We accordingly entered into relations of some shakiness, my Greek being none too strong. The faun turned out to know Turkish, though, and much better than Greeks usually do. He told me that he worked in the strawberry fields near by. He also informed me that the spring

in the archway was an *ayazma*, one of the holy wells in which the Levant abounds, dedicated to Aï Yanni—St. John. I asked him if he were Aï Yanni in person. He, smiling, replied that as a matter of fact his name was Yanni, but that for the rest he was no saint. I fear he spoke the truth. Yet how should he have been? He said that on the day of the saint, later in the summer, people came from everywhere about with candles, with music, with beer, and made merry in the hollow. While there were elements of incongruity in this picture, it only established me in my view of the faun. The custom he described was older, after all, than Christianity. I had discovered a Sacred Fount and its tutelary divinity.

## II

Well, we chatted a while, and then I rode away. But I went back. I took a great fancy to that Sacred Fount and to that faun. There was a pleasant magic about them—their having survived, in their secret hollow, so many changes of those barren downs. The fountain must surely be of perpetual youth. It happened that I always returned to it on the same sort of day. When I got up in the morning and saw a Mediterranean light, I thought of the Sacred Fount. I doubted whether I should find any-



thing there on an ordinary day. As it was, I rarely failed to find the faun—perhaps through his willingness to receive human offerings of tobacco. There were times, however, when I wondered what he was up to. He seemed to spend his days in an elegant leisure, unperturbed by the passing of the season and the work of the fields in which he had claimed a share. I asked myself if some hamadryad were hidden among the trees, who fled at my approach and reappeared when I was gone.

It was finally given me to have light on the hamadryad. Yanni inquired of me one day if I could read. Upon my confessing that I could, he produced a scrap of crumpled paper, which he handed to me with some solemnity. I could scarcely make out the scrawling on it. I finally announced that the words were in Greek, and therefore to me unintelligible. "But if you can read——" objected Yanni. He evidently doubted my possession of the accomplishment I had boasted. I presume he thought that the language of writing was one, whatever the dialect written. I only wish it were so. However, we eventually succeeded in picking out between us the contents of the letter—for such it was—I pronouncing such vocables as I seemed to see on the paper, and Yanni correcting me out of his superior knowledge.

The letter, I concluded, was from a hamadryad, and one in distress. "My heart," it ran, "come once more. No one will hurt you. I am in Koum Kapou." I didn't quite like that of her—being in Koum Kapou. Koum Kapou is a fishy quarter on the south side of Stamboul, where the Armenian Patriarch lives. What should a hamadryad be doing there of all places? I looked at the faun, by way of finding out. As for him, he exclaimed with a sigh:

"These are the things a man must suffer!"

I was inclined to smile. Yanni looked as if he might, at a stretch, be nineteen.

"Well, are you going?" I threw out.

I remember he glanced behind him, in the quick way he had, before he spoke:

"It may be a trick."

"At least go and see," I said. "Let the fault be on the other side, if there is one." I always abound in specious sentiments at moments of indecision.

He considered it doubtfully. "*Vallah!* I don't know what to do," he finally uttered.

"But what if she should really need you?" I asked. "What if she should be ill?"

The hamadryad would have forgiven him anything in the world if she had seen his eyes when he answered me:

"She is. And the fault is mine."

He took his tobacco-box out of his girdle and began rolling a cigarette. There was an extreme pliability about his crouching figure that gave him more than ever the look of a wood creature, ready to spring away at a sound. He might have been surprised to know that the stare I bestowed upon him was not without envy. He was evidently one of the favoured people to whom things happen. I have never made up my mind just how they differ from the rest of us. It isn't altogether a matter of looks. There are pimply ladies, there are hatchet-faced young gentlemen, who only have to put their nose out of the door to enter into a crucial relation with the first person they see. They are the people to whom the world belongs. They are on the inside, so to speak. We others are on the outside. We sit by and watch the hares that they have started. I, for example, might go to and fro a hundred years without entering into a crucial relation with a cat. All I know is that there is a wireless telegraphy going on about me, of which I haven't the code. Perhaps that is why I have such an inordinate curiosity about people's stories. They are never very extraordinary, to be sure. When you have heard one—or when you have heard three: how many possible stories did that Frenchman say there are?—you have heard the rest. But—I don't

know—there are always variations, of character, of circumstance, that make each a little different from the last.

If I hoped to hear the story of my faun, however, I was disappointed. Just at the wrong moment there appeared an old man who evidently desired speech of him. Without being exactly a humpback, the old man's shoulders looked as if he had never tried to stand up straight till that moment; and he had a cataract in one eye. He also carried a bundle done up in a painted handkerchief. Although he saluted me with no lack of respect, I felt myself *de trop*. I therefore took my leave.

### III

I meant to go back the next day. I was rather curious about my mysterious young man, with his old gentlemen and young ladies. But the sun wasn't right, and affairs kept me busy. In fact, ten days or a fortnight passed before I had another pagan day. What a day it was, too! The crickets had come by that time. Do you like crickets? Some people don't, but they make me rather dotty. All the drowsiness and antiquity of summer is in them. They were like the sound of the clear warm light as I rode over the hills. But I found no faun. I concluded that he must have gone to Koum Kapou. So,

after drinking from the Sacred Fount and leaving a votive box of tobacco beside it, I rode on up here.

I came by another way I had discovered, a paved lane arched with bay-trees, through which you look down into the valley below. It comes out there, to the right of the Armenian cemetery. As I got near the top I heard a curious sound. It was a kind of chanting that rose and fell in the distance. When I was clear of the trees I made out a procession winding up the hill from the village. My first impression of moving white and colour made me think of the faun. Should he not be watching among the trees while youths and maidens, chanting, white-robed and chaplet-crowned, led some sacrificial creature through the pagan morning to some sacred height? But I soon saw how different a procession was this. A boy, in a sort of buff surplice with a red cape, led it, carrying a tall silver cross. Two other boys, a little behind him, carried what might have been silver pyxes at the end of long staves. They were followed by others still in white, singing, with censers and lighted candles. You don't know how strange that candle-light looked on such a morning. Then, among a crowd of bearers in different coloured capes, I saw a bier covered with a red pall. The bier was partly covered,



that is. You know how they do. At one end was an uncovered pillow, and on the pillow an uncovered head jarred with the steps of the bearers, while two dreadfully white hands were clasped outside of the red pall. The head was that of a young girl, with a great mass of black hair, who should never have been carried up the hill like that, while crickets sang under such a summer sun. I wondered what could have brought her to the Place of Martyrs. After her came priests in black robes and white embroidered chasubles. I recognized them for Armenians by their brimless pointed hats of black or purple. One of them, with a long white beard, wore a black veil over his hat and carried a silver crosier. They were all chanting and swinging censers.

They came on up the hill, chanting, chanting, passed me so close that my horse jumped, and climbed the last bit of slope to the Armenian cemetery. There I saw them stop, put down the bier, take off the pall, lift the body, and drop it out of sight—like that, without any covering. It was horrible—that young girl, on such a summer morning—— I turned away and came up here.

It was of the nature of the faun that I suddenly found him beside me. By that time the people were gone. He squatted on his heels, as

usual, and as usual I handed him my cigarette-case. But I realized that my paganism had somewhat cooled.

"Well, did you go to Koum Kapou?" I asked, glad to escape from the oppression of what I had just seen.

"No," he replied gravely, after a pause. "How did I know what they would do?"

"Why, what could they have done?"

"They might have made me an Armenian," answered Yanni.

The word, and the hint of a smile drawn by my look, made me conscious of something that had happened inside of me. I remembered the first time I came here, how those gravestones and their Armenian letters jarred on my pagan morning. This time—— I don't know; I presume it had never occurred to me before that one may have inglorious ancestors and a bulbous nose, and yet be subject to this queer adventure of life. The pitifulness of what I had seen somehow included the rest of those abandoned graves. These old boys around us here had as much to compensate them as anybody could for being bundled out of a warm and coloured world. They belonged to a great race. They died in a conquering cause. They laid up for themselves crowns of martyrdom for falling in holy war against the infidel. And

they lie here now in their promised land, in sight of the continent that gave them birth, on one of the most romantic hilltops in Europe. But those other Asiatics, to whom no land ever was or ever may be promised, lie there in the face of that desolate *campagna*, in soil unfriendly whether Greek, Roman, or Turkish, in all the ignominy and defeat of death. They made me think of a phrase in the Koran: "He who dies in a strange land dies the death of the martyrs."

"How could they make you an Armenian?" I asked at last. I suppose he meant that they wanted him to change the Orthodox for the Gregorian creed.

"They were very angry. They went to my father, they took me to the Armenian priest, I don't know what they didn't do. That was why I went to Aï Yanni. I have been there four months, hiding. My father brought me food sometimes—that old man you saw. I have never been away except at night. They might have killed me."

"But why?" I persisted, beginning to be interested in my faun again.

"Because—because of that girl you saw them take there," he replied, pointing to the Armenian cemetery. "I was apprentice to her father. He is a shoemaker in the village. The

shop is downstairs, upstairs they live. I lived there too. And she—she became my friend.” He drew meditatively at his cigarette. I could see that it would be easy for him and that young girl with the black hair to become “friends,” and why they had left her at the Place of Martyrs. “How does one know that things will end like that?” he went on. “I would have married her, but they said I must first become an Armenian.”

I must have stared ridiculously at that young man to whom things happened. I realized that he was telling me a story. It was the oldest and commonest of stories; and yet, in this place, among these people, it had a colour of its own. One of those chaps who scribble might have made quite a thing out of it, with all the frills and stuff they put in. He didn’t put in enough—to suit me. I had to put them in for myself, while he sat smoking and staring down into the village where he hadn’t dared to go for four months. There was such a look in his eyes, too. It made me forgive him for being so abominable, see him only as a piece of life, of blindness and fatality. It even made me feel a queer respect for him, a cobbler’s apprentice *quel-conque*—the respect of the spectator for the actor.

Then I saw the shadow fade out of his look. He snapped away the stub of his cigarette,

stood up, and stretched himself like an animal let out of a cage. He was all faun again as he smiled down at me, with his hands behind his head—young, wild, handsome, irresponsible.

“That also has passed!” he exclaimed.



## UNDER THE ARCH

*It was ridiculous, and yet—Well, it is a rat trap, and you, madam and sir and all of us, are in it.*

—O. Henry: THE VOICE OF THE CITY.

### I

EVERY now and then a big warm drop would splash down on me from the dome. It was right over me, the dome, irregularly pierced by translucent bull's-eyes. From them a greenish light wavered through the haze of steam. It gave one a curious sensation of being out of the world, under the sea. A little imagination made mermen out of the figures about me, with their nude torsos tailing off into striped red towels. It amused me to wonder what my Puritan forbears would have made of such an underworld, and whether I owed it to their hard New England winters that the heat of the marble crept so deliciously through my nomad skin. That reminded me of some one in the *Thousand Nights and One Night*—not as we read them in our school days, but as Dr. J. C. Mardrus has translated them in sixteen big French volumes—who made a poem of

that world, and keeps breaking out into an ecstatic "*O hammam!*" It struck me that a Debussy could find an *Après Midi d'un Baigneur* in the hollow echoes, just this side of music, that rippled and rumbled through the place—the different-keyed splashings of water, the ring of metal bath bowls, the duller click-clack of wooden clogs on marble, the rise and fall of voices, punctuated occasionally by the muffled slam of a door.

In an alcove near me a young man was singing. Every other phrase of his song began with "*Aman! Aman!*"—which you must understand as meaning something between *Alas!* and *Have mercy!* I could see no more of him than a dark poll and a muscular brown shoulder, by reason of a panel of Byzantine sculpture that closed the end of the low marble dais on which he sat. The floor of his alcove, too, was inlaid with coloured marble in a Byzantine pattern of interlaced garlands. Who knew out of what Greek church they came, long ago? And there a Turkish peasant—or so it pleased me to fancy him—sat singing one of those endless old unhappy love songs of Asia, knowing no more of Byzantines and their carvings than if his fathers had never knocked over a Byzantine empire. "*Aman! Aman!*" he sang, sending the strangest reverberations

quivering up into the misty green twilight of the dome.

Presently another young man, wrapped from his waist to his heels in the red towel of rigour, click-clacked across the marble floor, stepped out of his clogs on to the central platform where I lay, knelt beside me, and began to knead my wrists. He was rather a striking-looking young man, not so much because he was tall and well made, as because of two strangely sombre eyes he had, under heavy black brows and a low-growing thatch of black hair. There was something vaguely familiar about him, withal. And I noticed that his left arm was tattooed. But what I chiefly noticed was what he began to do to me. Turkish massage is very much like any other massage, except that it goes into refinements of torture which I have not suffered in Christendom. Starting as mildly as you please, it culminates by removing your vertebræ, one after another, turning them inside out, and replacing them with more or less care. When it is done with more care you feel as if you had just broken the bank at Monte Carlo and were about to take Cleopatra to wife. When it is done with less care you feel as if you had broken your neck—and sometimes you have. This particular bathman showed that he happened to be an expert in his art. So I let him

do his worst, while I closed my eyes and drifted into a state of beatific semi-consciousness.

When this part of the complicated rite of the bath was at an end, my *tellak* clapped his hands as a signal thereof, and led the way into one of the alcoves. There, sitting me down on the hot marble step that ran around the three sides and squatting on his heels in front of me, he proceeded to put me through the humiliation of peeling. Heavens! Such rolls of grime as come off one under a bathman's horsehair mitten! And we imagine that we are a cleanly race! The Turks do not share our good opinion of ourselves in that regard. They never wash so much as their own little finger in standing water. Consequently in a real Turkish bath there is no such thing as a tub or a pool. There are merely small marble basins set about the walls. Out of the one beside which I sat my bathman dipped a little water now and then with a brass bowl and sluiced away such portions of my anatomy as he had separated from me.

Up to this time no word had passed between us. But at last he made an overture.

"Eh, say," he invited me.

Now that we were forced to sit nose to nose, it seemed to me again that I knew him. Yet if it had been in a bath that I had seen him I surely would have remembered the tattoo on

his arm. It was not an anchor or a heart or a butterfly or any other of the devices dearest to the artist in India ink. It looked like writing.

"What shall I say?" I answered. "What do you want to know?"

He stared at me for a moment with an intensity that my fatuous question did not deserve. Then:

"Are you from Austria?" he asked.

It was a query, I must confess, that left me a little cold. I had expected something more in keeping with those melodramatic eyes. I wondered, too, why Turks so often take me for a German, and why I so distinctly fail to be flattered.

"No," I promptly replied. "I come from much farther away—from America."

"Ah," uttered he, as if disappointed.

I am always seeing myself act the Fat Young Man to other people's Will o' the Mill, and am almost always saddened by their failure to play up to my cue. I can, however, play up to theirs.

"Where is your country?" I inquired, knowing perfectly well beforehand what he would answer.

"I come from the Black Sea," he said—"from Kastambol."

"From Kastambol!" I exclaimed, beginning to cheer up again. I hadn't known beforehand



what he would answer, after all; for I had known that he would answer Sîvas. All bathmen do, with such tiresome unanimity that I have about given up that line of conversation. "I have heard that there is an old castle there," I went on. "Is it true?"

"Yes. It is from the time of the Genoese." The Turks, despising their Greek subjects, attribute everything that antedates their own era to Genoa the Superb. "But I have never seen it. I am not from the city. I am from a village outside."

So far so good. But what next? There was something about this black-browed young man that made me curious concerning that vague village of his. What surgery or magic, however, could get anything out of him? I am not, alas, of those gifted personalities who turn inside out at will their most casual acquaintances. On the contrary, people I have known all my life daily become for me darker mysteries. Yet I thought I could tell things about my village, and its houses that it would take you a day to walk to the top of, and its machines for shooting you there, and its little black contrivances for talking to people you can't see, and its endless underground rabbit holes, that would sound more Arabian than any night those sombre eyes ever stared at.

"In my country," he suddenly volunteered out of a clear sky, "there is a lake. And in the lake there is an island. And on the island there is a tree. And under the tree there is a hole. And down the hole stairs go, to a palace under the lake. And there a girl sits, a Christian girl with yellow hair, combing her hair with a golden comb. And she has a golden ball in her lap, and all around her are pearls and emeralds and I don't know what."

"Oh!" exclaimed I with ravishment. This truly was a bathman among bathmen. I had heard of lakes and islands and subterranean princesses before, but never from a serious-looking person rather taller than I. After all, we were getting on! "Have you ever been down the stairs?" I inquired.

"No. We are afraid. A man went once and he did not come back."

"Well, perhaps you would not have wanted to go back," I suggested.

But he only shrugged his shoulders. And there was the end of that! He should, of course, have gone on and told me a long and complicated story, which I would quickly have run home and written down and sent to America and got an enormous price for. Instead of which he began to scrape the under side of my upper arm so ferociously as to make me bawl

out that I wasn't made of shoe leather. But I presently added, borrowing a leaf from his book:

"Eh, say."

"What is there to say?" he replied. "It is you who have things to say. You go, you come, you hear, you see, while we are always shut up. It is as if we were under the lake in my country. See how little light comes through the water!"

He pointed to the greeny bull's-eyes in our own little dome. That rather pleased me, you know.

"Then you didn't go back! Only—where is the yellow-haired girl?"

"Where?" he assented.

And silence fell heavily again between us. Nothing is more tantalizing, thought I, than the way people walk about the world stuffed with the most interesting information, and without any reason for keeping it in the dark, yet totally unable to impart it to any human being.

"What is that on your arm?" I asked at last, thinking to try a new tack.

"What should it be? It is nothing."

"Let me see," I insisted, taking hold of his arm to keep him from moving it.

The tattooing was in writing, but in writing I couldn't make out—till I suddenly realized that although it was on a Turkish bathman's

arm it was in German script. Then I managed to read it. And what I read was "*Ach Lisa, ach!*"

"*Ach Lisa, ach!*" I repeated aloud, smiling at him in the knowing way of men with regard to women.

As for him, he pulled his arm away. It occurred to me to wonder if one took one's bathman seriously, and I began to see where Austria came in. Still, I continued to smile my knowing smile. And I asked:

"Have you ever been Under the Arch?"

"I went once," he replied gravely. "But that is finished."

But it seemed to me, from the way he looked, that something was not altogether finished. For me at least it was not, for I suddenly began to remember. What I remembered, primarily, was what I am always forgetting—that the world doesn't stand still, particularly in one's teens.

"It is well you tell no lies," I said, "for I have seen you Under the Arch."

"Then it was a long time ago."

"It was a long time ago. It was five or six years ago, when you were still a boy."

He looked at me more strangely than he had looked at me yet. In his eyes it was as if something began to smoulder.

## II

It is curious, is it not, what things will stick in the memory of a refined, cultured, and liberally educated gentleman—to borrow a consecrated phrase from the club women—who cultivates a taste for letters, and who would have liked to see himself a creator of memorable houses and gardens. It is curious what things will stick, on some dark shelf, and what things will knock them down.

Spurting lights, slippery cobblestones, overhanging grapevines, a pervasive odour of mastic, a no less pervasive jingle of crank pianos, and scraps of every language under heaven, and vivid ladies picking their way on high heels between house-fronts that climb through the dark to some quiet star—or lounging, much touched up as to complexion and much cut down as to toilette, in open windows of the ground floor, not unready to pluck the cap off the head, the purse from the pocket, or even the heart out of the body, of the men of every land and every sea who find their way Under the Arch in Galata. . . . That is what suddenly came back to me—that and the picture of a Turkish peasant boy, with a gay handkerchief knotted about his fez and coloured tassels bobbing below the knees of his loose blue knickerbockers, who



strolled down a certain garish lane of that quarter with his hands in his pockets.

He attracted my attention because Turks are comparatively few Under the Arch, being the only true Puritans left in the world; and because the eyes with which he stared at this and that, from under heavy black eyebrows, made such an intensity of darkness in the colour of his handsome face; and because he was evidently so young. It was also evident that everything he saw was perfectly strange to him—as if he had wandered Under the Arch by chance.

As I watched him he stopped and looked into a lighted window. The window belonged to a wineshop of a kind not uncommon Under the Arch. The clients were served by gaudy girls, whom it was not too difficult to induce to sit down and share a glass. In one corner a gypsy turned the handle of a *lanterna*—the crank piano of the country. Near the window were sitting two women and a man—also a Turk, apparently. One of the women, catching sight of the boy outside, got up, went to the door, smiled at him, and beckoned. She was a creature in scarlet satin, with a mop of hair trailing over one eye. The boy blushed, half smiled in return, shifted his feet uneasily, but did not move. Then the creature, still smiling, went up to him, took his hand, pulled him after her into the

wine-shop, and sat him down beside her at an empty table.

I, who stood in the street and watched, found myself strangely affected. I am not much of a missionary. Otherwise I would hardly have been standing in that street. It was such a street as refined, cultured, and liberally educated gentlemen do not care to be caught in—at least by others of their ilk. If you, reader, are displeased at catching me there, turn the page or shut the book. Don't expect me to argue about it. My business is to tell a story—or rather to give you the materials for telling yourself a story. I may say, though, that life interests me more than theories of life, that I have never found that curious exhibition to confine itself to broad and seemly avenues, and that in a grubby byway I have discovered simplicities and honesties which sometimes fail in your guarded drawing-room. For the rest my temperament inclines me to believe with the Frenchman that to understand is to pardon. I also believe that there is too much meddling with other people's affairs, and I am for letting a man hang himself with his own rope. Yet when it comes to a boy——! Of one's own youth one fancies that if one had known this or that, or if at a certain moment one set of accidents had turned up instead of another——

Youth is so priceless a thing, it lasts so little time, such endless consequences hang on its ignorant decisions—— But what, I asked myself, watching youth's encounter through the lighted window, is one to do? One can't put youth in a padlock. It is no use to snatch it by the hair of the head from experience. The bitterest experience is better than none. Is it, though? Still, if I marched in and pulled the boy out, what would prevent his marching back as soon as I disappeared?

His encounter, I could see, was too embarrassing to be pleasant. His cheeks became the colour of his companion's dress and he didn't know where to look or what to say. The creature continued to smile, patted his hand, ordered him a glass of mastic. He hesitated before taking a sip. Then he set down the glass so hurriedly that he tipped it over, coughing and wiping his eyes. At that everybody laughed. The creature laughed too. In a moment, however, she put her arm about him and whispered in his ear. She got up, and he got up.

But all of a sudden he bolted out of the door.

### III

I looked at my bathman, then, in whose sombre eyes something began to smoulder. Yes, those must be the same eyes, and the same eye-

brows. He had grown tall, though, and his young country colour was gone. Had the bath boiled it out of him, or—what?

“Then you have seen her?” he demanded.

*Ach Lisa, ach!* For the moment a smile almost flickered out of me. I remembered how moved I had been, watching through the lighted window so long ago, and how relieved when he ran away. It had confirmed me anew in my policy of non-intervention. And he had gone back, naturally enough. And the scarlet creature had gobbled him up after all. The Scarlet Creature, or The Bathman’s Romance! I could see it all. Life will be life, even Under the Arch. That was what had become of the golden hour of his youth. And all he had to show for it was the label on his arm—and the smouldering in his eyes. *Ach Lisa, ach!*

“Yes,” I answered. “I saw her come to the door, beckon to you, pull you in, give you something to drink, whisper to you, and then I saw you run away. But you went back, eh?”

And I reproduced a remnant of my knowing smile. He, however, looked at me rather oddly.

“That was not the one!” he exclaimed at last with abrupt contempt.

He turned away and began to prepare for the next stage in operations by making soapsuds with a tuft of raffia in a big copper bowl. I

watched him with an access of curiosity which would make it appear that one may, after all, take one's bathman seriously. Perhaps he felt the intensity of my silent questioning. Perhaps the accident of my having seen him before, of my having been a witness of that moment in his life, made a sort of bond between us. Perhaps the smouldering in him had never found vent. At all events he suddenly dropped his raffia and turned back to me.

"You know, my *Effendi*, what it is to be young. After I ran away that night I was ashamed. I heard men talk, they told me things, they laughed, they would not let me forget. How should I know anything? I was only sixteen. I had always lived in my village, in Anatolia. I had never seen women or thought of them. And suddenly to see them like that, with bare faces, bare arms, in clothes made to fit them, of silk and velvet—not such bags as our women wear! And the lights, and the music! I didn't know there were such things in the world. It was like the palace under the lake in my country.

"So I went back. I went back to the same place to show them I was not afraid. I sat down at a table and I ordered *raki*. The girl who had spoken to me before was there, sitting in a corner with a sailor. She remembered me



and she laughed. 'There is my little Anatolian!' she said. 'Come here, little Anatolian!' "

He stopped again and pulled up the copper bowl, as if uncertain whether to go on with his story or to shampoo my head. I waited for his decision with a curious suspense.

"Just then another girl came and sat down beside me," he finally said. "*Effendim*, she was the princess under the lake in my country. Her hair was like gold, as I had never seen hair before, and her eyes were so blue they frightened me. We say, you know, that people like that have the Evil Eye. I was frightened and my heart began to beat as if I had run from St. Sophia to the Taxim. At first she only looked at me and smiled, in such a way that I was both less frightened and more frightened. Then she began to talk to me. 'Why did you order that *raki*?' she asked. 'It is bad. Don't drink it.' When she spoke I began to tremble. I always trembled when I heard her voice—to the last time." He paused an instant. "I could not say anything. I did not know what to say. She saw it and she went on talking to me. As my mother never spoke to me, *Effendim*, she spoke to me. She told me I mustn't go again to such places. She asked me where I lived, what work I did, when I was going to my country. And at last she sent me away."

I almost smiled again, remembering my own attitude on a certain occasion. But I could tell myself that I had no Evil Eye, and that in me the voice of intervention would never have made him tremble! It was curious, though, what a power he had, with so little of a story, to move me so much a second time. It was partly the intensity of his tone and of his sombre look. It was also the curiosities within curiosities he set alight—about the world he lived in, about his strange lost princess. I must say he did very little to satisfy them.

"*Vallah,*" he exclaimed after a moment, "I understand nothing of your Europe. Sometimes I want to go, to look. Sometimes I am afraid. Are you devils there, or men—who make all these machines that walk on the land and swim in the sea and fly in the air? And the women—of them I understand least. Are they all like that one? Are they all bad? Can you call such a woman bad?"

I shook my head vaguely. But I doubted if he noticed me.

"When she sent me away that night," he went on, "she thought it was finished. But it only began. Every night I went back and watched in the street until I found her again. And after that, for three years, I saw her nearly every day; but not as you think. She never

would let me come to her house. I always saw her in wineshops, in coffee-houses, in the street. She made me go to school, too, and she paid for it. I can read, *Effendim*, because of her. She could read too, and she could write, and she could sing, and she could play—your piano, our lute. She knew everything. But she didn't know how to keep me from becoming mad. I thought of nothing else but her. I wanted to take her away from Galata. In the three years, you see, I became a man. But she would not listen. She said she was too old, she said she was too bad, she said she loved me too much, she said she could never live in Anatolia or I in Europe. How do I know what she said," he broke off, "or where she is now? *Akh Lisa! Akh!*"

It became more and more evident that the story, such as it was, was one which you have to tell yourself. There was enough obvious interplay in it of East and West, of blue eyes and black, of innocence and—must I say corruption?—the eternal lure of the contrary. And one could more or less make out the case of the dark-browed young peasant lover. But what of the obscure courtesan, cast out from her own land into that place of all vulgarity and disaster, who had become for him a princess of fairy lore?

“What is it, *Effendim*,” he broke out, “that a woman does to a man? The world is full of them. Why will not one do as well as another? Why——” He threw up his hand, as they do. But presently his eye followed mine to the inscription pricked on his arm. “She wrote it there,” he said. “She always told me I didn’t know how to say anything else! She wrote it there the last time I saw her—the first time I went to her house. At last I made her open the door to me. And I begged her as I had never begged her to go away with me. ‘*Akh Lisa!*’ I said. ‘*Akh*, I can’t go on like this. I can’t work in the day. I can’t sleep at night. All the time I see your eyes. They make a fire in my heart.’ She smiled a little, as she knew how to smile, and then she wrote this on my arm with a needle. And then——”

Another bathman came into the alcove, followed by an old gentleman who sat down opposite me. My bathman stirred his copper bowl again and then put me past all power of sight or speech by pouring soapsuds over my head. Across the vaulted room the bather in the Byzantine alcove was still singing his melancholy old love song of Asia. “*Aman! Aman!*” he sang, making strange reverberations quiver up into the dome.

## FOR THE FAITH

### I

**H**ALF way up the steps of the Cup Sellers, which climb from the vine-hung exit of the Spice Bazaar to the Street of the Brass Beaters, there stands a certain building of light stone. There is nothing to distinguish it from a hundred other modern buildings in the ancient city of Stamboul. The black marble pillars flanking the entrance are as easily matched as the big red-and-gold Croats watching between them. But a passer is more than likely to cast a curious glance into the doorway. And the carpet-workers on the opposite side of the street, as they spread the brilliant crudities of the new Anatolian looms to the chastening of sun and rain, or give the last toning of polished flint and experienced palm—they ask themselves: “Who are these *gyaours* who come from strange lands and build great *khans*, while we dwell in sheds?” But they do not answer the question. Nor do the lancers, on their way to guard the Sultan at mosque of a Friday morning, when they fill the steep incline be-



tween the stair-sidewalks with a cataract of plunging horses and scarlet banderoles. A moment they turn their dark faces upward in half defiance, but the next they have other to think about. Not so however the ministers of state who sometimes drive by with galloping outriders. Not seldom do they carry the question to their desks, wondering what secret is behind those light stone walls, that busies so many and reaches so far and keeps an embassy in such irritating activity.

In a high corner room of this very building there sat one day the Reverend Thomas Redding. There was little in the aspect of the Reverend Thomas Redding to suggest mystery or subversion. On the contrary, as he leaned at his desk with his fingers buried in his round gray beard, his appearance was distinctly conciliating. The kindly blue eye with which he looked forth upon the world, the temperate ruddiness of the countenance which it illumined, the comely contour of his figure—which seemed somewhat under the middle height and which was as far from the Silenus as from the ascetic—all these pointed out a person of a gentle and comfortable middle life.

If the furnishings of his apartment bespoke the garniture of his mind, one would conclude that his thoughts were far from worldly things.

The chief recommendation of the room was its view, which looked across the huge umbrella pine of the carpet-workers aforementioned to the Golden Horn and the lower Bosphorus. For the rest, one gained an impression of nudity. In the middle of the oilcloth floor rose a desk, at which Mr. Redding sat as one cast away upon a reef. The other furniture might have been riveted to the walls. Of these, two were almost concealed by the glass-doored bookcases of our grandfathers. The volumes thus protected against the ravages of the elements included such works as "Barnes' Notes," Paley's "Evidences of Christianity," and "Edwards on the Will"; or lighter literature like "The Romance of Missions" by the lamented Maria West, "The Devil in Turkey," and "Light on a Dark River"; together with numerous other publications concerning more or less directly the evangelical enterprise. After the bookcases, the most conspicuous object in the room was a large map. This might have been found unique by some, in that its colouring indicated religious distinctions rather than political. The upper half of the western hemisphere was of a virgin white, the lower was shaded with red—in reminiscence, perhaps, of the Scarlet Woman. The same roseate hue tinted considerable portions of the European continent, which faded to white

in the northwest and changed easterly to a bottle green. The very eastern rim, however, as the greater part of Asia and Africa, was dyed with black. A relief to this uncompromising darkness was afforded by sporadic islands of white and radiating shoals of gray, which, with similar archipelagoes in red and green, were intended to designate centres and spheres of missionary influence.

Upon this decorative object were fixed the eyes of Mr. Redding at the moment of our introduction to him. He had a secret fibre of the adventurous, which had always thrilled to the sight of a map or the tale of a traveller. This time, however, another chord was touched, as he considered that sable fringe of Europe. He looked sadly away from it, across the red roofs, the bubbly domes, the marble and cypress minarets, to the blue of the Bosphorus. It had grown wondrously familiar to him—this scene which had once been the tissue of his airiest dreams. He recalled with what emotion he had first realized the whiteness of the field for the harvest; with what exaltation he had received his acceptance to the cause; with what a strangely mingled feeling of triumph he had entered this ancient city, intoxicated with the novelty of his sensations and proud to have come while there was yet to do. But thirty

years had passed, and what had he accomplished? His enthusiasm had availed nothing against the dishonour of that darkness. He had never so much as turned one Moslem from the error of his way.

It was of the man's humility that he did not, as some might have done, lay the blame upon the Moslem. And he had just begun to search anew the sources of his own inadequacy when a knock at the door interrupted him.

"Come in!" he cried, looking over his shoulder.

Two persons entered. The moment of their advent was occupied by such profound salaams that their faces were invisible. Then Mr. Redding perceived, with feet together and hands clasped humbly before him, a personage of some forty years—short, thick-set, dark-skinned; black-eyed, black-haired, and black-bearded; with the hooked nose of the East, the red fez of Turkey, and the frock coat of Europe; and collarless withal. Beside this sharp-eyed and smiling individual stood, in a similar attitude, a boy of nine or ten, whose small countenance was as black and as brilliant as a bit of cut onyx. His appearance was rendered the more striking by the complete accoutrement of a Turkish field-marshal.

Upon these two the Reverend Mr. Redding

cast an eye of no little astonishment. Not so much that he was unused to such spectacles, as that there comes a time in the life of man when transitions are difficult to follow. But he speedily recovered himself, smiled, bowed, waved his hand, and rose to detach two chairs from the military row under the map. It would not have occurred to him that his salute was less sweeping and less honourable than those which he had received, for he had never quite yielded to the customs of the East; nor could he look upon a "native" as other than an inferior.

The conversation opened in a general way, the visitors demonstrating how strange may be rendered the use of a chair by the custom of the divan. After those extended and searching inquiries which are the corner-stone of Eastern courtesy, the elder of the two at length bent forward, glanced inquiringly toward the inner room, and asked in a confidential tone:

"Are you alone?"

"We are," assured the missionary.

"I have something for you," continued the stranger, "if——" He looked again toward the inner room.

"Let us go in there, then," suggested his host, with gratifying perspicacity.

Once inside, the stranger cast a quick eye about him, proceeded to fumble in the inner re-



cesses of his being, and finally produced a green silk bag which depended by a cord from his neck. Undoing the somewhat complicated fastenings of this object, he took from it a letter which he handed to the missionary.

That gentleman accepted the document and regarded it, as also its bearer, in no little amaze.

"He is in Fezzan!" whispered the stranger behind his hand.

"In Fezzan!" exclaimed the Reverend Thomas, in deeper mystification than before.

"Yes," replied the stranger. "He is selling dates in the Oasis of Sebkha. It is written as I say."

Mr. Redding continued to question the mysterious communication with his eye. At last, however, it occurred to him that the missive itself might contain light to illumine his darkness. Accordingly he broke the seal and deciphered its brief contents. Then he looked up and uttered cordially:

"I am glad to make your acquaintance, You-souf Bey. You are welcome to our house. But Fezzan!" he exclaimed again. "What is he doing in Fezzan?"

"He is selling dates," repeated the stranger, with his curious smile.

"But why?" protested the missionary.

The stranger shrugged his shoulders:

"Eh! His superiors suspected that he learned too much in England. They also found one of your holy books. Therefore—Fezzan!"

"Fezzan!" iterated the Reverend Thomas once again. The name seemed to have a fascination for him. "Where is this Fezzan?"

"You go to Tripoli," answered Yousouf Bey. "From there you take camel southward, toward Kanem and Bornu."

The little blackamoor, who had been staring solemnly about at the tall book-cases, suddenly looked toward his companion.

"Bornu!" repeated Mr. Redding, turning to consult his map in the outer room.

At the second pronunciation of the name the little blackamoor began to whimper, and a big tear splashed the gold of his cuff. Yousouf Bey thereupon shot him a look which speedily dried the child's tears. He repressed another whimper, dug his fists into his eyes, and resumed his inspection of the cheerless apartment.

The Reverend Thomas, in the meantime, stood intent before his map. The region which he sought was covered with so dense a black that the names were indicated perforce by white letters. "What an opportunity!" he thought to himself, the old habit of mind triumphant above the ruling of experience. Then he said aloud:

"So he was exiled! I never knew. I supposed he had lost interest."

"Oh, no! His Christian teaching is what supports him in his exile. You must see that being a date pedler in an oasis of Fezzan is quite different from being a colonel of artillery at Constantinople. But he is very cheerful. And"—Yousouf Bey lowered his voice—"he does much for your faith. I, too, have become interested. My home is really there, you know. I have only one wife here. The others are in Tripoli and Fezzan. I greatly admire your Prophet. His followers seem to have something which those of Mohammed have not. I would like to know more about him."

Mr. Redding was strangely moved by the words of this emissary from afar. The mystery of strange places hung about him, and the romance of unknown deeds. The incongruousness of his declarations seemed not grotesque, but almost pathetic. And it was providential that this encounter should have occurred at the very nadir of his own discouragement. He had then been partly instrumental, after all, in planting the seed of the Word in dark and distant regions. Who knew what might yet come forth?

"I am very glad indeed that you came to see me!" he uttered feelingly. "We must have a

great many talks together. But to-morrow is our holy day, and we have meetings that will tell you more than I can. Come and bring your little companion. We have classes for boys as well as for men." He bent over and took the child's small black hand: "And do you come from Fezzan too?" he asked.

The boy looked up with round frightened eyes. At a word from his companion, he ceremoniously kissed the missionary's hand. Then Yousouf Bey explained that Arabic was all they understood in those regions.

"Ah, well, bring him too!" returned Mr. Redding. "He will have the other children to play with at least." He patted the cheek of the little blackamoor, whose wide eyes were intent upon the unintelligible colloquy.

"Now that I have done my errand I must not take your time," said the stranger, rising.

"Not at all!" protested the other. "May I look for you to-morrow?"

"I will come," replied Yousouf Bey, salaaming as profoundly as before.

## II

He went. He went not once, but several times and in several places. He even arose one Sunday before a polyglot Sunday-school and delivered himself of a harangue, in which he eulo-

gized the holy book there taught in so many tongues, and announced his intention of introducing it to the natives of Central Africa.

It can be imagined with what emotions Mr. Redding observed these developments. Upon each appearance of Yousouf Bey at some service of worship the good man would hover about him, anxious to advance any favourable impression, yet fearful of interrupting by importunate question any work of grace which might be going on in the Mohammedan's heart. So it was that their later meetings had been in a way public. But after two or three weeks Yousouf Bey called again at the missionary's office. And Mr. Redding, in expressing his cordiality, at last ventured to utter his hope that these experiences had been the means of affording a clearer vision, a more definite intent.

The Tripolitan gave assurance that he had received the greatest benefit:

"I can understand," he said, "the enthusiasm of Christians for your Prophet. He was a noble man. The Jews did wrong to murder him."

The missionary was disappointed. The sentiment expressed could not be condemned; yet it seemed too catholic.

"I hoped we might see your little boy," he said, vaguely hoping to bring about more



pointed declarations—"the little black boy who was with you."

"He? Oh, no! I sold him the very day after I met you—to Tahir Pasha. He will make a good eunuch. They are the best—from Bornu."

"Sold him! That little boy!" exclaimed the horrified missionary.

"Yes. What else should I do with him?" inquired the Tripolitan, with an amused smile. "That is part of my business."

"To sell slaves?"

"Yes."

Mr. Redding stared blankly at the man. He had expected a confession of faith, and what sort of confession was this? Yet in the depths of his disillusionment he found courage to realize that the Word could not take lodgment in such a heart; that here was one whose errors first needed reproof; that the reproof must not be so severe as to discourage further interest.

"You say you admire Christ," at length he began gently; "but you have wives in different cities and you sell slaves. Christ would not have done such things."

"Eh, *Effendim!*" protested the slave-dealer with a deprecating shrug, a suave wave of the hand. "Your Prophet was a holy man, of those hermits who do not take wives, who do not do

many things that other men do. We have all seen them. But I am not a holy man." He smiled. "Moreover, I travel. I am a merchant. And it is much less expensive to keep three wives in three places than to take one with you wherever you go. There are also other advantages. I am sure you would find it so." He smiled and bowed, as if in deference to his interlocutor's intelligence. Before the scandalized missionary could summon protest he went on: "As for the slaves, they are the only money we have in many parts of Africa. I sell cotton there, I sell silk, I sell iron, I sell whatever I sell; and what have they to pay me? Nothing but shells or blacks. The shells are useless to me. I must take the blacks. But it is much better for them, too. As you see, I am a kind-hearted man. I do not maltreat them. And they are much happier up here in Constantinople than to run naked there in the desert!"

There was something in the conviction with which these remarks were uttered, as in the courtesy of their expression, which Mr. Redding found indefinably disconcerting. He felt that his part would have been easier had the interview taken a more polemic turn. But again, before he could gather his words, the other forestalled him.

"There is a matter," continued the slave-dealer, looking about and drawing confidentially nearer, "of which I wish to speak to you. I travel, as you know. My business takes me far. I have been to Timbuktu and the ocean. I have seen rivers which even the English have not seen. And I am interested, as you also know, in your holy man. I am interested in your work. We have nothing like this." The dramatic wave of his hand visibly included the entire building. "Now"—he lowered his voice still further and looked keenly into Mr. Redding's eyes—"I would be very much pleased if you would let me have a case of Bibles to take back with me. I am going in a few days. I could spread them all over the Sahara."

The kindly blue eyes were fixed upon the black and glittering ones in speechless wonder. There were elements of contrast in this suave slave-dealer, with his frock coat and his lack of collar, his guilty experience of dark portions of the earth and his interest in Christianity, which the Reverend Thomas had never encountered.

Yousouf Bey did not quite read the uncertainty which he saw in the blue eyes.

"But if you do not wish——" he began tentatively.

"Why, of course I wish!" broke in the mis-

sionary with vehemence, homing from his reverery. 'Of course you shall have them!'

### III

The case of Bibles was duly prepared. As for Yousouf Bey, however, he failed to call for it. Day after day Mr. Redding waited, expecting that every knock would be succeeded by the entrance of his African friend. But the box lay under everybody's feet till its fresh planks took on the dishonour of grime. And finally Mr. Redding, sad, but abounding in faith, caused it to be stored in his inner room.

The incident touched him more nearly than might have appeared. His evangelical zeal, his interest in strange places, and that human quality which makes a new or a distant enterprise more engrossing than an old or a present one, had all been deeply concerned in this matter. At those moments when one looks for the tangible result of the day's work, his casting up of the thirty years filled him with deeper dejection than ever. He felt, in his humility, that the occasion had come and that he had been found wanting.

Accordingly it was not without pleasure that he suddenly looked up from his papers, one day in the latter part of the thirty-first year, and met the eyes of his old friend Yousouf Bey.

This worthy was frock-coated, smiling, and collarless as ever. There was also more familiarity in his greeting.

"You must have wondered why I never took my Bibles," he began affably, going straight to the point. "It was a great disappointment to me. I travelled farther than ever this time. But"—he drew his chair close to the desk, looked carefully around as if to descry legs under the book-cases, and whispered dramatically—"the police! You know what they are. I was on my way here when they stopped me. They took me to the Ministry. There they told me all I had done—how many times I had been here, how many times I had gone to the other places, what I had said, what I had thought! Then they threatened that if I came here again they would lock me up, and they sent me under guard to my steamer. What could I do?"

Had Mr. Redding been inclined to reproach he would have softened under this recital. But at such evidence of the power of faith, his mood was far from aggressive. He was even a little fluttered. He supremely desired to say the right thing. In Yousouf Bey, however, there was a troubling element of the uncertain which required diplomatic procedure.

"I have kept your books for you," he said. "Was my friend in Fezzan disappointed?"



Yousouf Bey smiled.

"I did not get to Fezzan this time," he replied. "It is a long story. I took three Circassian girls from here, and when I reached Alexandria I was arrested for stealing them. But I said they were my wives, and nobody could prove they were not, so I got away. Ah—they made my fortune, those girls. May their shadow never grow less! From Egypt I went down to Zanzibar, and there I sold one to the Sultan. He would have taken the three, but he hadn't the money. He gave me a thousand pounds. And she was worth it. They are all black down there." He paused a moment, his eye clouded with reminiscence.

The Reverend Thomas seized that opportunity to raise his voice. The issue was fair and square:

"You told me that you only took the blacks because you had to. We do not have to take Circassians for money, here. And will they be much happier down there among naked savages?"

The Tripolitan smiled as if he knew how to enjoy a laugh at his own expense, nodded indulgently, and laid a soothing hand on the other's arm.

"You—do—not—un—der—stand!" he said. "Do not try to understand. We smoke out of

different *nargilehs*, but my soul! we can still be friends! Now hear what I did with the other two. There in Zanzibar, I met the agent of an Indian Rajah. They are on the lookout, you know, these great people." He spoke in the dramatic sing-song which is the charm of Eastern inflection, aiding his story with a play of hands and eyes which gave it inimitable vivacity. "So I went to India. And the Rajah bought both of them. If I had only known! He would have bought the third, too. But it is all *kismet*, this business. You never know. He paid me though, the Rajah. I cleared nearly three thousand pounds on the whole business. Cleared, you understand. It costs, an adventure like that. I had to take them like sultanas." He leaned back smiling in his chair, as if awaiting the congratulations of his auditor. That gentleman, however, maintained a deep silence. The bewildered disappointment in him amounted almost to a physical hurt. And if it was not manifest in his countenance, at least his disapproval seemed to be. For Yousouf Bey leaned forward again.

"I suppose you think," he uttered with dignity, "that I might have given them Bibles instead of selling them. It would have been no use, however. They are only women. But I did what I could for them. Here what would they

have been? Circassians are as common as leaves. Any army captain might have bought them. As it is, they are sultanas. Their bread is honey. They sleep in rose-leaves. They walk on gold. It is I who have done this for them. Is it not just that I should clear three thousand pounds?"

"No!" declared Mr. Redding vehemently. "They were human beings and you sold them like beasts!"

The other allowed a shade of surprise to escape him. Then he shrugged his shoulders and smiled again.

"Eh!" he exclaimed. "We do not smoke the same *nargileh*, as I said. But we are brothers. And do you know? I admired your Prophet before; but since I have been to India, since I have seen what his followers are able to do there, I reverence him still more. I have not learned enough about him yet. And I still wish my Bibles. But I am afraid to take them here. The police, you know! You have people in Egypt, though, have you not?"

"Yes," assented the missionary.

"Of course! You have them everywhere!" The slave-dealer winked knowingly. "Well, let me have a letter to them. It will be safer to get my books there. These Turks are so suspicious."

Mr. Redding did not like the wink. But he wrote the letter.

## IV

It was more than two years before the man turned up the third time. He came in as if he had been absent but a day, looked into the other room to make sure no one was there, and sat down close to the desk. He was evidently in a hurry.

"I tried to see you before," he said in a low voice. "But—the police!" Then, wiping his face with a huge red handkerchief, he went on: "I am leaving for Tripoli, and I want you to come with me!"

Mr. Redding smiled. Time had mellowed the earlier shrewdness of his feeling. To him now Yousouf Bey was not so much a seeker after Truth as a property of the picturesque, a fountain of the unexpected. He had wondered what new surprise might be in store, and here it was! Still, there was always room for the miracle of grace.

"Did you see our friends in Egypt?" he asked, a little curious as to what success another might have had.

"Hoo-oo!" exclaimed the Tripolitan, in his high sing-song. "Did I see them? I showed your letter. At sight of it they embraced me.

There was no door which your name would not open for me. We became as brothers. And I carried away I don't know how many great cases of Bibles."

"Ah! Then you took Bibles into the Sahara this time?" inquired the Reverend Thomas, with warming interest.

Yousouf Bey extended his arms as if to embrace the universe.

"Fezzan, Tibesti, Kanem, Bornu, Bagirmi, Wadai, Darfur, Kordofan—they are full of them!"

"And so you saw our friend?" pursued the missionary.

"Yes, I saw him. He is still selling dates. He has done very well. He helped me with the Bibles, too. He knows more about them than I, of course."

Mr. Redding smiled encouragingly.

"Well, you made better use of your time on this journey than on your last. Was it not more satisfactory?"

"Yes, much!" Yousouf Bey smiled broadly. "And now I shall do things on a larger scale. I want many more Bibles—many—many. And"—he drew his chair still nearer—"I want you to come with me, as I said. We will go to Tripoli. From there we will ride south. We will visit the Sheikh of the Senussi Arabs on the way. He



is a religious man like yourself. It will be a profit to him, it will be a profit to you. Then we will go on and see our friend at Sebkha."

Mr. Redding shook his head, smiling.

"How can I, a poor missionary, make such journeys as that?"

The Tripolitan regarded him a moment with half-shut eyes.

"Poor! You who fill the world with your people and build *khans* like this! You say so because you do not wish to come."

Mr. Redding stopped smiling.

"I say so because it is true."

Yousouf Bey clasped his hands before his face and drew back reproachfully.

"My soul! Do you insult me? Are we not brothers? Where one goes cannot two go?"

The missionary shook his head again:

"But, even then, how could I leave my work? If I go, there is no one to do it."

The slave-dealer laid his hand on the other's sleeve:

"Listen. You speak of your work. Think of the good you would do there. No one has ever gone to those people as you would go. Thousands would receive benefit from seeing you, from taking your books. You would also incur the gratitude of your own people. And I swear on the head of your Prophet and of mine that

you would be back here in three or four months."

Although the idea was too fantastic to be seriously entertained, it was one which appealed to the imagination of Mr. Redding. And he was somewhat at a loss to express his unwillingness to embark upon such an adventure, in terms which should not wound his would-be host.

That personage, perceiving the missionary's uncertainty, tightened his fingers a little on the latter's arm and looked close into his face.

"You and I understand each other," he uttered slowly. "We are not children. And you of the West do not bargain when you talk. Tell me: will you come with me or will you not?"

A curious sensation possessed Mr. Redding. He had no more idea of going to Tripoli with this slave-dealer than of going to the moon. He wondered what the man meant by it, and his peculiar insistence was irritating. But for a moment, under the glitter of those motionless eyes, a strange confusion unsteadied him. It was against himself, as it were, and with an unaccustomed weakness of inflection, that he answered:

"I am sorry, but I cannot come."

For a moment Yousouf Bey did not stir, eye or hand. Then he made a gesture of impatience, rose, and began to walk about the room.

"Eh—you know!" he said at length. "But I shall have to go without my Bibles. I would be stopped. You could take as many as you wanted, though. You have lost a great opportunity." He looked across his shoulder at the other, who remained silent. Then he walked up and down once more, examining the various objects in the room. Finally he stopped in front of the desk. "What is this great *khan* for?" he asked abruptly. "And your schools, and your hospitals, and your men, and your women? You are everywhere."

The blue eyes of the Reverend Mr. Redding looked quietly into the black ones confronting them.

"To spread the Christian religion," he answered simply.

The slave-dealer made no attempt to repress a smile.

"Excuse my laugh," he said, resuming his tour of the floor. "But if that is true you throw a great deal of money into the sea. If that is true! Do those carpet men across the street know anything about the Christian religion, for all this *khan* of yours in front of them? If that is true! I could count on my fingers all the

Mohammedans that have ever become Christians. If that is true!"

"We do not preach by the sword," returned the missionary mildly.

The other wheeled and stared at him. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"Eh—I don't understand!" he exclaimed. "People are as God made them, and who can change them? You have a long arm and a strong arm. But either it is broken or you do not know how to use it. I thought—well, never mind what I thought. But I did not think you were children." He suddenly stopped and looked at his watch. "I must be going," he continued hastily. "I am sorry you will not come! We might have done great things. I don't know whether we shall meet again. But you will hear of me. When they speak of Haji Hassan, you will know it is I. May your nights be pleasant!"

And so, with a rapid salaam, he went away.

## V

No later than the next winter the Reverend Thomas Redding sat one afternoon at his desk, engaged in editorial labours. It was his weekly office to issue a paper for the benefit of native Protestants and those interested in them. This periodical, appearing in several languages, did not contain intelligence inaccessible to the secu-

lar press. Its facts were selected and set forth with a view to the edification rather than to the mere information of its readers. But to a certain degree, in consequence of a lack of resources, Mr. Redding was even dependent upon the secular press. Accordingly he found in the London *Times* a strong tower, as it reached him no more than three or four days after publication and not infrequently afforded views of the political situation which the censorship excluded from the local papers.

On the present occasion, he had just unwrapped the journal which I have mentioned. Glancing over the staid and respectable headlines which distinguish that weighty sheet, his eye was arrested by these words:

#### REVOLT IN TRIPOLI CRUSHED

Haji Hassan Himself Killed in the Front  
of Battle

"Haji Hassan!" repeated Mr. Redding to himself. Involuntarily he looked toward the door. And, turning back to his paper, he wondered indistinctly whether revoltors wore frock coats.

"Our special correspondent in Tripoli," he read, "telegraphs that the insurrection which has for the past few months disturbed the hinterland of Libia has we hope once and for all been stamped out. The famous rebel Haji



Hassan, inspired by his successes among the southern tribes to imagine that he could try conclusions with Italian troops, was encountered on the 23d inst. at Sidi-Bu-Agoll, on the caravan route to Fezzan, by a force under command of Lieutenant-General Count Mario Martinengo, and was completely routed. By a particular piece of good fortune Haji Hassan himself was shot in the engagement, which he led in person with fanatical bravery.

“From the numerous prisoners something was learned of the character and antecedents of the late Arab leader. As the march of civilization has made it increasingly difficult for an adventurer of imperial ambitions to achieve a throne, our readers may find a certain romantic interest in the history of the dead man. He was a Tripolitan by birth, of mixed Arab and Turkish blood. During many years, while ostensibly carrying on, under various names, a mercantile and slave trade throughout central Africa, he was employed as a spy by the Turkish and Egyptian governments. Possessed, however, of remarkable powers of command, and initiated by his calling into the secrets of affairs, his influence among the Saharan tribes at last tempted him to strike for a throne. Successfully usurping the powers of the Sheikh of the Senussi, whose son-in-law he was, he ex-

tended by degrees his authority over the entire region north and east of Lake Chad. He then proclaimed himself Sultan and prepared, as he hoped, to sweep the Italians into the sea. The main objection to his acceptance by the Arabs had been his taint of Turkish blood. Accordingly he designed, by striking a sudden and successful blow at Tripoli, to win the uncertain to his banner and thus to secure the foundation of a new Arab empire in North Africa. There is reason to believe that the disaffection had already begun to spread to Tunis and the Sudan.

"The plan was the more promising as no other revolutionary in North Africa had possessed such knowledge of the world or had been so well prepared to encounter European troops. Haji Hassan's followers were found to be well armed, rifles and ammunition having long been smuggled to them through Fezzan in cases of merchandise and even—we are told—of Bibles. And not only were these followers well armed. They had also been excellently drilled by the late 'Sultan's' confederate, an ex-artillery officer from the War College at Constantinople, who was educated at Woolwich.

"These circumstances made the uprising far more dangerous than any which have preceded it. Only the excessive confidence of the rebel chieftain, which led him to strike too soon, made

possible the crushing of his forces. His Majesty King Victor Emanuel is to be congratulated on having at his command so able an officer as General Martinengo, and on having succeeded in disposing of the person of the insurgent at the very outset of the campaign.

“A detailed account of the action will be found in our news columns.”

## MILL VALLEY

*Look around you at the world. Everywhere you will see blood flowing in streams, and as merrily as champagne. . . . Civilization develops in man nothing but an added capacity for receiving impressions. That is all.*  
—Fedor Dostoëvsky: LETTERS FROM THE UNDERWORLD.

### I

I SHALL never forget the night I got there. The train went no farther than Nicomedia in those days, and it took so long that you nearly died of old age on the way. But when the three red lights on the tail of it dwindled into the dark, I had the queerest sense of having been dropped into another world. It was the more so because one couldn't see an earthly thing—not a star, not even the Gulf which we were to cross. I only heard the lapping of it, close by, when the rumble of the train died out of the stillness. That and the crunch of steps on the sand were all there was to hear, and an occasional word I didn't catch. The men could hardly have been more silent if our lives had depended on it. I had no idea how many of them there were, or what they looked like—

much less where they were taking me. They simply hoisted a sail and put off into the night. I would have sworn, too, that there was no wind. The sail filled, however: I could see the swaying pallor of it, and hear the ripple under the bow. And as my eyes got used to the darkness, I discovered an irregular silhouette in front of us, and a floating will-o'-the-wisp of a light. The silhouette grew taller and blacker till the boat grounded under it. Then, by the light of the will-o'-the-wisp, which was a sputtering oil lantern on shore, I made out some immense cypresses.

You have no idea how eerie that landing was, in a waterside cemetery that was for all the world like Böcklin's Island of Death. The men moved like shadows about their Flying Dutchman of a boat, and their lantern just brought out the ghostliness of gravestones leaning between the columns of the cypresses. And I suddenly became aware of the strangest sound. I had no idea what it was or where it came from, but it was a sort of low moaning that fairly went into your bones. It grew louder when we started on again. We climbed an invisible trail where branches slashed at us in the dark, and all kinds of sharp and sweet and queer smells came out of it in waves. And nightingales began to sing like mad around us, and off



in the distance somewhere jackals were barking, and under it all that low moaning went on and on and on. And at last we came out into an open space on top of the hill, where a bonfire made a hole in the black, and a couple of naked figures stood redly out in the penumbra of it, with a ring of faces flickering around them.

## II

The bonfire business, I afterward found out, was nothing but a wrestling match—they had them almost every night on the *meïdan*—and the moaning came from the mill-wheels in the valley. They were picturesque old wooden affairs, the mills, all green with moss and maidenhair fern, that went grinding and groaning on forever and making you wonder what on earth it was all about. They kept me from getting over that first impression, that sense of walking through all kinds of things without seeing them. The mills belonged to a village, or rather a snarl of muddy lanes, at the top of a filbert valley, where water tumbled down to the Gulf. It was only fifty miles away, but it might have been five hundred and fifty. There was none of the contrast with Europe that always strikes you here. It was Asia pure and simple—simple, at least, if not pure! Not that there was any lack of contrast, transposed as it

were to a different key. Most of the villagers made attar of rose, and they had heavenly rose gardens, separated by ruinous mud walls and by alleys of such filth and such smells as you can't conceive. No one ever dreamed, apparently, of cleaning a street or repairing a house—unless to plaster it afresh with cow dung. Yet the houses were wonderfully neat inside. And I caught glimpses in them of rugs and tiles and brasses that made my fingers itch. I had one of the few wooden houses in the place, a huge tumble-down old *konak* belonging to an absentee rose-growing Pasha. It stood a little apart from the others, in a big garden. And it leaked so villainously that I had to sit under an umbrella every time there was a shower. But the garden and the view made up for that.

What struck me most, though, was a something in it all which I could never lay my finger on. That's the wildest part of the Marmora, you know, for all their railroad on the north shore. Some day, I suppose, when international expresses go thundering through to the Persian Gulf, it'll be all factory chimneys and summer hotels, like the rest of the world. But now there's nothing worse than vineyards and tobacco plantations. On our side there were not many of those. The hills stood up pretty straight out of the water, and most of them

were wooded down to the beach. You might think it virgin forest, if you didn't know that Roman emperors used to build villas there. It seemed incredible that a country inhabited so long should show so few signs of it. The people might have camped in a clearing overnight, and the woods were just waiting to cover up their tracks. But the wildness was not the good blank unconscious wildness we have at home. There was a melancholy about it. The silence that hung over the place was really a little uncanny. The mills only cried out, in that monotonous minor of theirs.

It was lucky for me that the wireless telegraphy I sometimes felt about me allowed the inhabitants to smoke water-pipes of peace with me, in a little vine-shaded coffee-house on the *meïdan*. And I couldn't imagine where in the world they had all picked up their manners. Of course I was asked a good many questions, and some of them were pretty personal. That is a part of the Oriental code. It was amazing, though, what a *savoir faire* they had, what a sense of life and a few other things. I couldn't make them out—taken with their vile village and their utter ignorance of the world at large. The *Müdir*, to be sure—as it were the mayor—was something of an exception. He was a grave, plump, suave personage who might have made

an excellent Cadi of tradition if he had never heard of Paris. As it was, I'm afraid he took less thought for his peasants' troubles than of the extent to which they could be made to repay him for his own. I quickly found out, not altogether to my joy, that he wanted to practise his French as much as I wanted to practise my Turkish. On such occasions as I had the honour of squatting at his little round board, his knowledge of the Occident would manifest itself in an incredible profusion of spoons. The first time I returned his hospitality I discovered that he was not averse to sampling my modest cellar. I also discovered that he didn't care to be found out. These people, you know, are tremendous prohibitionists.

Then there was the *Naïb*, who was some kind of country justice, and a *Chaoush*, an officer of police, all done up in yellow braid and brass whistles. But the one I liked best, and who interested me most, was the *Imam*. You might not have been inclined to take him seriously, if you saw his green turban and his rose-coloured robe. A more kindly, honest, simple, delightful old gentleman, however, it has seldom been my fortune to meet. He was a Turk of the old school, without an atom of Europe in his composition. I wish they were not getting so confoundedly rare. They are worth a dozen of

these new people who pick up the Roman alphabet and a few half-baked ideas of what we are pleased to call progress. The *Imam* consented to give me Turkish lessons. And I fancy he taught me rather more than was in the bond. I thought all I had to do was to sit down and look pleasant and turn him inside out at my leisure. Whereas more than once I had a feeling, after it was over, of having been turned inside out myself. It makes me grin, now, when I remember what a confident young ostrich I was. I've been out here quite a while, now, and to this day I'm never sure of my man—how that Asiatic head of his will work in any given case. My sole consolation is that I'm not the only one. In this generation I presume there must have been as many as five Europeans—and four of those, Englishmen—who didn't more or less make jackasses of themselves when they ran up against Asia. And I imagine it took them rather more than a year to arrive even at that negative degree of comprehension.

For that matter, I don't suppose I was precisely an open book myself. In this part of the world they haven't got our passion for poking around where we don't belong. Perhaps they've had more time to find out how little there is in it. And for a mysterious individual from lands



beyond the sea, whose servant can't be prevented from bragging of the splendour in which he lives at Constantinople, to bury himself in a remote village of the Marmora, must mean something queer. Does one give up a *yali* on the Bosphorus for a leaky *konak* in Mill Valley? And are there no teachers of Turkish in Stamboul? They never would understand anything so simple as my wanting to soak in their air and their language. I believe it didn't take long for the *Mütessarif* of Nicomedia to find out I was there, and for him to ascertain in ways best known to himself what I was up to. I often wondered what his version of it was. But he let me prowl about the country in peace—though I never got rid of a feeling that unknown eyes were on the watch.

### III

Everything, then, was still strange to me—the faces, the costumes, the curious implements, the hairy black buffaloes, the fat-tailed sheep with their dabs of red dye, the solid-wheeled carts that lamented more loudly, if less continuously, than the water wheels, the piratish looking caravels beating up and down the Gulf under a balloon of a mainsail. Once in a while I chartered one of them, to go fishing or exploring. All of which must have been highly in-

comprehensible to my astonished neighbours. I believe my man had to invent some legend of a doctor and a cure to account for so eccentric a master. It was only when I came more and more to spend my days among the cypresses on the edge of the water that I became less an object of suspicion. For while a Turk is little of a sportsman and less of a mere aimless sightseer, he likes nothing better than sitting philosophically under the greenwood tree.

My greenwood was, as I have said, a cemetery—the one where I landed the night I arrived. Heaven knows how long it had been there. The cypresses were immensely tall and thick and dark. And the stones under them, with their carved turbans and arabesques, and their holes and rain-hollows for restless or thirsty ghosts, were all gray and lichened with time, and pitched every which way between the coiling roots. You may think it a queer kind of place to sit around in; but the villagers didn't, and it took my fancy enormously. I don't know—there was something so still and old about it, and the spring had such a look between the black trees. It wasn't quite still, either, for that strange low minor of the water wheels was always in your ears. It ran on and on, like the sound of the quiet and the sunshine and the cypresses and the ancient stones.

And it made all sorts of things go through your head. I presume that first impression had something to do with it. You wondered whether the trees would have lived so long if so many dead people had not lain among their roots. You wondered—I don't know what you didn't wonder.

As the weather grew warm I used to pack a hammock and reading and writing and cooking things on a donkey, nearly every day, and drop down through the filberts to my cypresses. I used to swim there, too—and cut myself outrageously on the stones and sea-urchins of the beach. What I did most, though, was simply to loll in the shade and watch the world go by. Not that much of it does go by the Gulf of Nicomedia. If it hadn't been for a sail every now and then you would have supposed that people had forgotten all about that little blue pocket of a firth, leading nowhere between its antique hills. Then there were two or three trains a day, whose black you could just make out, crawling through the green of the opposite shore. And there was a steamer a day, each way, that it was as much as your life was worth to set foot on. You wouldn't think so, though, to see the people who packed the decks. It was a miracle where so many of them came from and went to, I often used to go down to the

landing to look at them, with all their different colours and types and languages. They gave one such an idea of the extraordinary wreckage that has been left on the shores of that old Greek sea. Only you don't get it as you do here, where races and creeds march past you and you stand by and admire. There was something more secret and ancient about it—more like Homer and the Bible and the Arabian Nights.

One afternoon as I sat under the cypresses what should go by but a caravan! I had never seen one before. First came a man on a donkey, with a couple of saddle bags to make your mouth water, and then a long string of camels roped together in groups like barges in a tow. What an air they had—the fantastic tawny line of them swinging against the blue of the Gulf! And how softly they padded along the shingle, with their mysterious bales and the picturesque ruffians in charge of them! They passed without so much as a turn of the eye, my Wise Men of the East, and disappeared behind the point as silently as they came. It gave me the strangest sensation. I had felt something of the same before. I could scarcely help it, looking out between those tragic trees at the white strip of beach and the blue strip of sea and the green strip of hills that were so much like other

hills and seas and beaches and yet so different. But there had never come to me before quite such a sense of the strangeness of this world where so many things had been buried from the time of Jason and the Argo—of this world of which I knew nothing and to which I was nothing.

## IV

You may believe that I was delighted when I went back to the village that night and found it full of camels. The air was sizzling with bonfires and *kebabs*—you know those bits of lamb they broil on a long wooden spit?—and strange faces were at every corner. They filled the coffee-house, too, when I finally got there. By that time it was too dark to stare as hard as I would have liked. But perhaps the scene was all the more picturesque for the shadowy figures scattered under the vine in the dusk, and the bubble of *nargilehs* filling the intervals of talk. A feature would come saliently out here and there in the red of a cigarette—a shining eye, a hawk nose, a bronzed cheek-bone. And out on the *meïdan* were groups around fires, with their little pipes that have all the trouble of the East in them, and their little tomtoms of such inimitable rhythms.

I found my friends established as usual in the



seat of honour—an old sofa in the corner of the café—and as usual they made place for me amongst them. When the ceremony of their welcome subsided, the *Müdir* took occasion to whisper to me that the leader of the caravan, an excellent fellow who had stopped there before, was telling stories. I then recognized, in the light of a lamp, the man I had seen that afternoon. He sat on a stool in front of the divan of honour, and behind him were crowded all the other stools and mats in the place. Although he had not deigned, before, to turn his head toward me, he now testified by the depth of his salaam to the honour he felt in such an addition to his circle. He was a curiously handsome chap, burnt and bearded, with the high-hung jaw of his people, the arched brow, the almost Roman nose. And shaky as I still was in the language, he didn't leave me long to wonder why he was the centre of the circle. He was a born *raconteur*—one of those story-tellers who in the East still carry on the tradition of the troubadours. Not that he sang to us, or recited poetry—although the *Imam* told me with pride that the man was a dictionary of the Persian poets. But he went on with a story he had begun before my entrance. It was one of those endless old Eastern tales that are such a charming mixture of ser-

pent wisdom and childish *naïveté*. And he told it with a vividness of gesture and inflection that you never get from print.

Well, you can imagine! I always had a fancy for that sort of thing, but it's so deuced hard to get at—at least, for people like us. And after that queer turn the first sight of the caravan gave me, down by the water, it made me feel as if I were really beginning to lay my hand on things at last. So I was disappointed enough when at the end of the story the party began to break up. Upon my signifying as much to my neighbour the *Müdür*, however, he said that nothing would be easier than to summon the man to a private session. If I would do him the honour to come to the *konak*—— I was tickled enough to take up with the idea, provided the meeting should take place at my house instead. I knew there would be *bakshish*, which I didn't like to put the *Müdür* in for, after all he had done. Moreover, I had a whim to get the camel-driver under my own roof—by way of nailing the East, so to speak!

## V

So the upshot of the business was that we made a night of it. Oh, I don't mean any of your wild and woolly ones. To be sure, we did wet things down a trifle more than is the cus-

tom of the country. There happened to be a decanter on the table, which the camel-driver looked at as if he wouldn't mind knowing what it contained; and being a bit awkward at first, I knew no better than to trot it out. The *Müdir*, to whom of course I offered it first, wouldn't have any. I suppose he had his reputation to keep up before an inferior. I was rather surprised, all the same, for it was plain enough that the camel-driver was by no means the kind of man the name implies, and a little Greek wine wouldn't hurt a baby. Moreover, I had heard of this *raki* of theirs, which is so much fire-water, and I didn't take their temperance very seriously. As for the camel-driver, he was rather amusing.

"You tempt me to my death!" he laughed, taking the glass I poured out for him. "Do you know that my men would kill me if they saw me now? These country people have not the ideas of the *effendi* and myself. They follow blindly the Prophet, not realizing how many rooms there are in the house of a wise man. They found out that I had been affording opportunity for the forgiveness of God, and they took it quite seriously. They threatened to kill me if I did not make a public confession. And I had to do it, to please them. On the next Friday I made a solemn confession of my sins

in mosque, and swore never to smell another drop."

At this I didn't know just what to do. I looked at the *Müdir*, and the *Müdir* looked at the camel-driver. The latter, however, waved his hand with a smile of goodfellowship.

"There is no harm now," he said. "We break caravan to-morrow at Nicomedia. Moreover, I do not drink saying it is right. I should blaspheme God, who has commanded me not to drink. But I acknowledge that I sin. Great be the name of God!" With which he tipped the glass into his mouth. "My soul!" he exclaimed. "That is better than a cucumber in August!"

These people are democratic, you know, to a degree of which we haven't an idea—for all our declaration of independence. Yet there are certain invisible lines which are sure to trip a foreigner up and which made me mighty uncertain what to do with the governor of a *müdirlik* and the leader of a caravan. But the latter proceeded to look out for that. Such a jolly good fellow you never saw in your life, with his stories, and the way he had with him, and the things he had been up to. It turned out that he knew western Asia a good deal better than I know western Europe. Tabriz, Tashkend, Samarkand, Cabul, to say nothing of Mecca and Cairo and Tripoli—such names

dropped from him as Liverpool and Marseilles might from me. Where camel goes he had been, and for him Asia Minor was no more than a sort of ironic tongue stuck out at Europe by the huge continent behind. It gave me my first inkling of how this empire is tied up. It seems to hang so loosely together, without the rails and wires that put Sitka and St. Augustine in easier reach of each other than Constantinople and Bagdad. I began to learn then that wires and rails are not everything—that there are stronger nets than those. Altogether it was a momentous occasion. To sit there in that queer old house, in a wild hill village of the Marmora, and speak familiarly with that camel-driver who carried the secrets of Asia in his pocket—it brought me nearer than I had ever dreamed to that life which was always so tantalizing me by my inability to get at it.

## VI

When the man finally withdrew, and the *Müdir* after him, I was in no mood to go to bed. They had opened to me their ancient world, with all its poetry and mystery, and I did not want to lose it again. I could see it stretching dimly beyond the windows where the water wheels went moaning under the moon. I went out into it. The night was—you have no idea



what those nights could be. They had such a way of swallowing up the squalidness of things, and bringing out all their melancholy magic. The rose season was at its height, and the air was one perfume from the hidden gardens. Then the nightingales were at that heart-breaking music of theirs. And the moon! It wasn't one of those glaring round things, like a coachman's button or a butcher's boy with the mumps, by which young ladies are commonly put into spasms; but it was an old wasted one, with such a light!

It was all the more extraordinary because not a creature was about—except a man who lay asleep on the ground, not far from the door. Apparently they dropped off wherever they happened to be, down there, and I used to envy them for it. I stood still for a while, in the shadow of the house, taking it all in. Don't you know, it happens once in a while that you have a mood, and that your surroundings come up to it? It doesn't happen very often, either—at least, to workaday people like us. So I stood there, looking and listening and breathing. And when I saw the edge of the shadow of the house crumple up at one place, without any visible cause, and creep out into the moonlight, I—I only looked at it. Nothing had any visible cause in that strange world of mine, and I

watched the slowly lengthening finger of shadow with the passivity of a man who has seen too many wonders to wonder any more. But then I made out a darker darkness winding back toward the house. And—I don't know—I thought of the man on the ground. I looked at him.

It was my camel-driver, dead as Darius, with the blood running out of a hole in his back like water out of a spout. For the moment I was still too far away from every day to be startled, or even very much surprised. It was only a part of that mysterious world, with its mysterious people and mysterious ways that I never could understand. What was he doing there dead, who had been so full of life a little while before? Was it one of his jokes? The night was the most enchanting you could imagine, the air was heady with the breath of rose-gardens, the nightingales were singing in the trees (down in the valley I heard, low, low, the weary water-wheels), and here was the prince of story-tellers with his tongue stopped forever, and the blood of him making a snaky black trail across the moonlight. . . .

## VII

What happened next? My dear fellow, you remind me of these kids who will never let you

finish their story! Nothing happened next. That was the beauty of it. I guess I got one pretty good case of the jim-jams after a while, and when I got through wondering whether I was going to be elected next, I began to wonder whether they wouldn't think I'd done it. Of course, I had done it, as a matter of fact, and that didn't tend to composure of mind. Neither did my speculation as to what the *Müdür* might or might not have noticed when he left me that evening. But, if you will believe it, nobody ever lifted a finger. The next morning the caravan was gone and apparently everything was the same as before. If anything, they were more decent than before. That was the worst of it. I don't believe I'd have minded so much if they'd stoned me and ridden me out on a rail and set the Government after me and raised the devil generally. I should at least have felt less at sea. As it was—— Hello, there's Carmignani! Let's take him over to Tokatlian's.

## THE REGICIDE

*Thus it appears that the sole reward of a shining life is oftentimes bitterness.*

—Richard Matthews Hallett: THE LADY AFT.

THE Atlantic, after all, is nothing but an American lake, and one passage is like another. You could almost make up the sailing list before going on board. There will be the person on his first trip, who speaks of London and the Alps as if they were Lhasa and the Himalayas. There will be the person on his sixty-ninth trip—that kind of a person on his sixty-ninth trip who finds occasion to apprise you of that fact when you give your name to the bath steward. There will be the lady who sings. There will be the gentleman who plays. There will be the individual who organizes the concert. There will be the college professor leading sixteen young ladies by the nose. There will be the distracting widow, accompanied oftener than not by an infant ruffian whom she confides to you to be the image of his poor father. There will be the mysterious personage who speaks to no one and who is variously referred

to as Hall Caine, Harry Lauder, or J. P. Morgan. And after that, to make up the chorus of the piece, there will be job lots of priests, drummers, students, card sharps, detached ladies, invalids, bridal couples, and nice-looking people you don't get a chance to meet.

And yet, after all, one passage never is like another. Consider, for instance, the difference between the voyages east and west. The card sharps, the distracting widow, and the person on his sixty-ninth trip, are the only members of the cast who do not outwardly and visibly undergo, between the two, some manner of change. Then you can never exhaust the combinations and permutations possible between the various groups. And with the strange contrasts that meet your eye, the strange tales that sooner or later reach your ear, the strange sense of the sea's power to put men into immediate relation with one another, it always comes to you with a fresh shock—at least it always comes to me—that the most unpromising people are often the ones who have the most surprising adventures. For life has a trick of being true to itself even in the little rocking world of a ship.

All of which is a more or less inconsequent preamble to my acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Blakemore. I first saw them at dinner



the night we left Naples. I must confess, however, that I paid but a mediocre degree of attention to the severe and gloomy dame upon my right. I have skimmed about a bit in my day and I have my generalizations. They are not so narrow as they might be, thank goodness; but neither are they so wide as to claim that every human being is interesting. I have known too many who were not. I therefore took as much credit to myself as if I had calculated the transit of Venus when Mrs. Blakemore undertook to convince a scandalized steward that she required tea with her fish. It went with her perennial black dress and its—to call them polka dots would connote more liveliness than their wearer diffused. Singularly destitute even of the maturer airs and graces of femininity, she kept a watch upon her lips that would have discouraged a more pertinacious companion than myself. Moreover nature had found means to enhance a certain martial deportment which was hers. You could not affirm that she was bearded like the pard, but you wouldn't be willing to answer for her in ten years. Nevertheless I might as well say here and now that as custom facilitated our intercourse, she rather came to remind me of Lamb's Gentle Giantess—except, of course, that she was neither a giantess nor gentle.

A curious little passage with her husband gave me the first hint of the sort. I happened one noon to see her examining with that gentleman the chart of our daily run, when all of a sudden she executed the most extraordinary little caper and gave vent to the most extraordinary little squeal. It was over so quickly that I could not be quite sure of my senses. I would as soon have expected such a manœuvre from the Statue of Liberty. But it made me think, for some absurd reason, of a sea monster I had watched a few days before in the Aquarium at Naples. This was a fearsome-looking creature with frazzles waving from it and a general air of intending to make mincemeat out of you. And then a cavity opened somewhere in its grisly person and revealed an interior of a most innocent baby pink. Well, I did not arrive at any great intimacy with Mrs. Blakemore, and I am unable to account for the distinctness of an impression which she did so little to confirm; but I never could quite rid myself of an idea that this singular woman was lined with pink.

It may be that I saw Mrs. Blakemore's case as a reflection of her husband. He was a rosy and genial little gentleman who affected a red necktie. He also used don't in the third person singular and looked askance upon the

"I-talians" crowding the forward deck. But that didn't prevent him from being full of kind offices and a certain dry humour. Indeed he only lacked a degree of flamboyancy to become what is known as the life of the ship. As it was, the nicest thing about him was the way he treated his wife. He carried her off as if she'd been the Queen of Sheba—although I entertained my suspicions as to who had done the carrying off. I will not say, however, that I would have appreciated the subtleties of the case to such a degree if Blakemore had not been so polite about my stories. I was on my way home from Constantinople, which few people on board had seen at all, much less looked at for five years, and I had that particular onion patch to myself. But Blakemore seemed to take more than a mere polite interest in my reminiscences. Even Mrs. Blakemore appeared to take a cue from him in our somewhat onesided councils. About Europe in general it was plain enough that she knew or cared no more than about Patagonia. She had apparently gone there for the pure pleasure of going home. But she would occasionally ask me, *à propos de bottes*, or perhaps by way of steering the conversation into fields where she knew me to be most eloquent, how hot it was on the Bosphorus, and what the people wore, and whether

there was a king, and if I saw many Americans.

For my own part, I dispensed with questions. In the first place, asking for information has always seemed to me a crude and unreliable way of getting it. Then, with regard to the Blakemores, I felt that after the small affair of the chart there was no information worth getting. I had met them a hundred times in New England villages. I had seen them a hundred times hurrying through foreign streets with grave unseeing eyes. A hundred times I had discoursed with them in hotel drawing-rooms, at compartment windows, on steamer decks, concerning the superlative beauty of American as compared to all other human institutions. There was nothing about them I didn't know beforehand. So, but for an accident of the dinner table, my smugness might never have been rebuked. I might never have heard, that is, one of the drollest little stories I ever picked up at sea.

It came out through the agency of the college professor, a gentleman for whom life was a large and unruly classroom and the sole method of establishing relations therewith the Socratic. Having doubtless learned the story of everybody else's life, he set about obtaining that of Mrs. Blakemore, to which end he in-

quired how long she had been over. I didn't exactly prick up my ears when she said eight months. It only made her more typical to have spent eight months in Europe without any of it rubbing off on her. I did prick up my ears though when it came out that the eight months had been spent not in Europe at all, but in Mesopotamia. In fact I felt a little irritated about it—as you do when you get very chummy with a man on the way over and then see him drive away from the pier in a Black Maria. What on earth had these good people been doing in Mesopotamia, of all places, where I've always been dying to go—and at a season when everybody who can gets out of it? The question evidently agitated other minds, for the professor began speaking of Egypt and the Holy Land. It appeared that he sometimes varied the monotony of taking young ladies abroad in the summer by escorting old ones in the winter.

“Well, we did pass Egypt on our way south,” I heard Blakemore say, “but we spent most of our time in Basra.”

Everybody looked blankly at everybody else, wondering where in the world Basra might be—everybody, that is, except the narrator of this tale, who had not lived in Constantinople for five years for nothing.

“Why, that's the place at the head of the Per-



sian Gulf, isn't it?" I asked, wondering as I stirred my coffee whether missionaries and red neckties went together. "Did you happen to run across the consul of ours who's been kicking up such a row down there?"

"Oh, I believe I saw something about it in the *Paris Herald*," said a lady across the table. "Didn't he kill a king, or something?"

"There's no telling what he did," I answered. "The people who sit in consulates, under our admirable system, are about as queer as those who visit them—especially at those out-of-the-way posts, that are generally filled by gentlemen into whose antecedents the Department does not feel it necessary to inquire very deeply. The Turkish papers were quite amusing about this particular ornament of our public service—the White Peril, and so on—but they didn't make it very clear what he was up to when he tried to pot some local royalty. Perhaps he was on the order of the capitalists we hear so much about nowadays, who hunt in pairs and contrive to wring concessions out of dusky potentates with the help of a dazzling pair of shoulders! Anyway it raised all kinds of a fuss. Washington has had to apologize to everybody from the Sultan to King Edward, and gunboats have been skipping about like spring lambs, and our worthy consul has gone home very much

*persona non grata*. You probably know more about it than I do, Blakemore."

The minute I turned to him I saw that he did. He was looking down at Mrs. Blakemore, who had swung her chair about in order to get up. Then he said to me with a smile:

"Well, I don't know as I'd have put it just that way. But I'm the man." And the two of them walked out of the saloon.

I haven't blazed on every occasion of my career with the brilliancy of an eight-million candle-power arc light, but on this one I felt uncommonly like a wax match in a waterspout. And it wasn't altogether on my own account either. I would have given anything not to have thrown Blakemore to the lions like that, for a liner is a worse place for tattle than a village Dorcas society. So as soon as I got myself together a bit, I went up on deck, where I found the two of them sitting silently in their chairs. It didn't make me feel any more comfortable. I pulled up another chair beside Blakemore—a vile trick, too; nothing makes me more furious than to have other people snatch my chair—and began rather lamely:

"I say, old chap, I'm awfully sorry to have made such an infernal donkey of myself. The thing positively never entered my head. You see I modestly took it for granted that I was the

only one on board who had ever been anywhere. And then no human being would ever take you for a regicide, as the papers had it. But they always distort things so. If you—if there was some trouble, I know there must have been good reason for it.”

I knew the man was a brick, but I didn't know what a brick he was till I heard him chuckle there in the dark.

“The reason was the funny part of it!” he exclaimed.

I had no doubt of that. The reason is the funny part of most human achievements. For the moment, however, I could only be conscious of gratitude to Blakemore for letting me down so softly, and of admiration for the way he did it.

“It's a wonder you didn't die of plague in such a deadly place,” I said, trying to take his cue and incidentally to disclaim some of my aspersions in the saloon, “or get eaten up by Bagdad boils. How on earth did you ever happen to go there?”

“Well,” answered Blakemore, “I've rather wondered myself. I guess our senataor had as much to do with it as anybody. He's a neighbour of ours, you know. And I'd never been about very much, and always had an idea I'd like to see the world. And then

Louisa here, she was sort of set on Afric's coral strand——”

A voice suddenly came out of the darkness beyond him:

“Golden sand, Alonzo.”

“That's so, Louisa,” he returned good humouredly. And to me: “I suppose you know ‘Greenland's Icy Mountains,’ sir—the missionary hymn. I never can remember whether Afric's or India's sunny fountains roll down their golden sand, but it's Louisa's strong point. She's vice-president of the Woman's Auxiliary at home, and I guess she'd 'a' been a missionary herself if I hadn't persuaded her to undertake a tougher job.”

I confess I had rather forgotten Louisa until she made her amendment. But the nature of the words she uttered reminded me, inconsequently enough, of the incident which I have recorded and of my somewhat ill-substantiated theory with regard to her inner composition. Which, with what Alonzo had been saying, gave me a new sense of the situation. I hardly know how to express the curious little complication of interest it suddenly presented to me. I began to see so much, indeed, that I'm afraid I forgot my contrition in my curiosity. Blake-more saved me, however, from the embarrassment of betraying it.

"Well, there didn't seem to be an openin' for us on Afric's golden sand or India's coral strand, so the folks in Washington split the difference and sent us to Basra. That comforted Louisa some, because of—— How does the hymn go?" he broke off, turning to his wife.

"'From many an ancient river, from many a palmy plain, they call us to deliver their land from error's chain,'" quoted Louisa from the shades.

"That's it," said Alonzo, resuming the thread of his discourse. "You see the Tigris and Euphrates flow through those parts, and it's palmy enough and plain enough to suit anybody. In fact it was so plain that the first time we see it we pretty near turned around and come home! And I shouldn't wonder if it would have been better for us if we had."

"Dear me!" I made haste to exclaim. "I've been waiting for years for a chance to get to Bagdad and the Gulf. What sort of a place is Basra?"

"What sort of a place is Basra?" he repeated. "I ain't very much up on these foreign towns, you know. Gibraltar and Naples and Port Said are about the only other ones I've seen, of any account, and those I saw mostly from the boat. But if they're all like Basra, little old Bennington is good enough for your Uncle Alonzo. I



shouldn't wonder if it isn't something like that place Venice you hear about. It's all little creeks and canals from the Shat—that big inlet where Louisa's ancient rivers run together. And Lord how it stinks when the tide goes out! And the houses are nothin' but mud shanties, most of 'em, and the streets are more like cow paths than anythin' else. The best thing about it is the palms. They're real tall and handsome, sort of like skyscraper umbrellas stuck around in the mud. I won't say, though, but what an elm would have looked pretty good to me. We found it a little lonesome, first and last—'specially at night, with nothin' much goin' on but dogs barkin' and water creepin' through the creeks and the palm trees slashin' around. They're a remarkable restless kind of trees."

The picture grew under my eyes, curiously, as Blakemore paused. The sounds about us, weaving a sort of melodic figure above the deep rhythm of the engines and the wash of the water against the side, made it all the more vivid—the coming and going of footsteps in the dark, the broken play of voices and laughter, the strumming of Italian guitars in the steerage. I thought of old summer nights on the Bosphorus.

"But I had my work," Blakemore went on. "We had quite a lot of invoices to attend to.

They send out tons of dates from there, you know, besides licorice and all sorts of gums, and some few of them A-rab horses. Somehow I took to them quicker'n I did to those other A-rabs. That's what most of the people are, down there. We didn't just get on to their curves, Louisa and I. Not that some of 'em didn't afford us a pretty copious exhibition of curves!" he laughed. "Of course it was hardest on Louisa, because the help wa'n't used to our ways and didn't understand more'n a quarter of what we were drivin' at. We like to have forgotten our own language. I certified a signature once for a sailor whose aunt had died in Portland and left him \$10 and a mournin' ring, and he was about the only American who ever came into my office. You can believe I didn't charge him any fee, I was that glad to see him. But it wouldn't be fair to make out that we were the only white people in the place. There was the English consul and his folks, and a few English traders, and the captains of the steamers that went down the Gulf and up the Tigris and the Karun, and Louisa's friends the missionaries, besides quite a number of other consuls and people who spoke English."

"What kind did you have for vice-consuls and clerks and all that?" I craftily inquired, by way of keeping the ball rolling. "White or black?"

"Neither. He was half and half, as most of 'em looked to be. He was a Persian, who never took off a stovepipe hat he wore, with no brim to it. His name was so long I called him Vice, for short. It fitted him pretty well, I reckon. He knew some English, and he claimed to be some blue-blood. It was through him that we came to know his nibs the Sultan."

"Oh!" ejaculated I. And I'm afraid my thirst for knowledge wasn't altogether ingenuous when I pursued: "How does there happen to be one, by the way? I thought the Sultan of Turkey ruled that neck of—palm trees."

"Well, he thinks he does. But the King of England has something to say about that, not to mention the Shah of Persia. And between the three of them there's a little ten-acre lot of a country at the head of the Gulf that has a sort of Sultan of its own. He gets most of his state revenues selling vegetables. It was along o' him and his folks that Louisa and I got into trouble." Blakemore chuckled again. "He used to come up to Basra quite a lot. I guess there wasn't much doin' down his way and he liked to keep up with the news. He talked English quite well. He'd been a clerk in the English consulate in Bagdad before he succeeded to the throne. You'd never guess it, though, to see him. He was a dark-complected party in a

green bathrobe, with about ten yards of muslin wrapped around his head for a crown. And under his bathrobe he had on a white night-shirt. They all wear 'em down there. I don't much wonder at 'em, either. You feel like goin' to bed most of the time."

"It must be good and hot," I threw out.

"Hot! I ain't afraid of the next world any more! The only way we could get any kind of comfort was to sleep all day in the cellar and sleep all night on the roof. The houses were built so you could. It come rather hard to us, though, not bein' used to that sort of thing. Then there were all sorts of critters crawlin' and flyin' about that made us mighty uneasy. And the victuals was kind o' queer and didn't just agree with us. And then we both got spells of fever. Most people do, there, and they seem to take it as a matter of course. But we couldn't, somehow. So when Vice suggested that we go down to the Sultan's place and rent a cottage he had on an island there, we jumped at the idea."

He stopped again, and I trembled lest something break his flow of reminiscence.

"Vice took charge of the consulate, and Louisa and I and two or three of the help—everybody has a raft of 'em there—went down the inlet. It was quite a journey, what with the

outlandish boat we travelled in, and the miles of date palms along the shore, and the bright green rice fields, and the swamps and the reeds and all. It took us about all day to do the fifty or sixty miles down to the Gulf, and then we had to sail a bit, out to the Sultan's island. It was night long before we got there. But I can tell you it seemed good at last to sit on something that was almost like a real piazza, with the sea in front of it, and stars shinin' overhead ten times brighter'n these, and a clump of palm trees at the side makin' a little company like.

"The island looked nicer at night than it did in the daytime. Most of it was red-hot rocks and white-hot sand. I never seen such a sun. The glare was enough to put your eyes out. But at least it was a change, and it didn't smell like the wrath to come. One end of it, too, where we lived, was quite pleasant and shady with palm trees. We had some neighbours who weren't quite so pleasant, though I wouldn't answer for the shady part. They were coloured folks.

"We didn't know till afterward that the island was the Sultan's summer home. He was stayin' in his winter palace, on the mainland. We sailed over there to see him once or twice. He had quite a neat little capitol, as things go down there, all white and more or less fixed up. He showed us around himself, most polite. I



never supposed royalties would put themselves out so much for common folks. It was because he was our landlord, I guess, and maybe he calculated to sell us some vegetables.

“His mother wasn’t so accommodatin’. It seemed the old lady was the whole thing in that country, and there was nothin’ for it but we must have an audience with her. We were taken into her part of the house and into a big room where there wasn’t much of anything but an iron bed with a sort of thick mosquito net over it. I thought we’d made a mistake, specially when I saw something move behind the net, and I started to back out. So I stood in the door and asked her how she felt. She didn’t know English, but the Sultan interpreted for us. She said she felt warm. I told her I didn’t wonder—under that canopy; she’d better come out where it was cooler. I don’t believe she was much pleased at that, or at some of the other things I said, and we didn’t stay long. It turned out that she was mortally offended by my coolness, and the shortness of our visit. She was that mad she wouldn’t have Louisa in alone to set with her, the way they do. Vice said I ought to have made a dive for the bed, tearin’ my hair and hollerin’ that I must see the beautiful being behind those curtains if it took a leg. The Sultan would have made to drag me

back, and then when the old lady got through gigglin' we ought to have sat and visited for three hours." Blakemore chuckled again. "Now did you ever have such doin's as that up to your place?"

I certainly never did—though I once had the honour of taking afternoon tea in the bedroom of a Turkish poetess (*honi soit qui mal y pense!*), the poetess being in the bed, wonderfully got up in pink ribbons and an *ondulation Marcel*. I inwardly blessed myself for the marvellous ass I was in so nearly missing the strange adventures of Alonzo and Louisa.

"Yes, they were funny folks," mused Blakemore—"easy goin' and good natured and all, but you never could tell which way they'd jump. The ladies now: they were all just about as modest as the Sultana. When you met 'em on the street they looked like one of those shower baths with a rubber screen around it, out for a walk, they were so scared you'd see anything of 'em; and some of 'em never travelled without a regular tent that it took two or three servants to hold over 'em. But they didn't seem to have no kind of moderation in their ideas. They were all one way or all the other, and you never could tell which it'd be. At least the bunch of them that lived near us on the island were like that. There was plenty of room, heaven knows. Yet

for some reason or other they used to come to bathe on our beach. And they—— The fact is they didn't——”

Alonzo's delicacy left me to gather wherein consisted the immoderation of the coloured ladies of the island.

“I have always understood,” I observed as gravely as I might, “that they are somewhat free in those warm countries.”

“Free!” exclaimed a voice beyond Alonzo's chair. “The last part of the time Alonzo couldn't go out of the house.”

Mrs. Blakemore spoke so seldom that her words weighed more than those of other people, and these affected me so powerfully that I was grateful to the darkness for hiding my face. Nevertheless I was increasingly able to appreciate what a brick Alonzo was. For in what he went on to communicate he somehow contrived to impart his own sense of the situation without being in the least nasty to his wife.

“That was just Louisa's meat, though,” he continued. “We'd been a little disappointed about the golden sand and all, you know, but here was a clear call to deliver their land from error's chain. When it came to the point, however, they weren't much for it. I presume it might have been different if they'd had an idea what Louisa was talkin' about when she took

her knittin' and went and set with 'em. Anyhow they went right on sun-burnin' themselves all over. So Louisa and I did what we could. We sent up to Bagdad by one of the English captains for a lot of bathin' suits. I wasn't sure how much they'd do toward turnin' the heathen from the error of her way, but I thought there might be room for quite a trade if once it got started. And sure enough it got started all right. There ain't a lady of wealth and fashion in the Persian Gulf this summer who don't go to parties in a red-and-white-striped bathin' suit! But Louisa didn't come out so well, for the same doin's kept on as before. And when she had a session with the Sultan on the subject, she found they thought the clothes were for land, not for water, and that they wouldn't dream of wettin' such pretty things."

Blakemore laughed with me that time. He was not the man to miss the humour of his wife's difficulties with the daughters of the sun. I am quite incapable, however, of reproducing the tone of his amusement. There was not a trace of sharpness in it. All the same an old line of Virgil popped into my head, repeating itself to the rhythm of the engines: *Dux femina facti*. I had no idea how this missionary consulship ended in a regicidal attempt; but I knew perfectly well that however Blakemore

might ascribe it to himself, Mrs. Blakemore was the head and front of it.

"We had quite a time about it first and last," Blakemore went on. "When we found that the slumberin' susceptibilities of our lady friends were not likely to be aroused by ordinary means, we tried more powerful ones. We sent the help to order 'em off. We invoked the authority of our country and went out with Louisa holding up the flag and I behind it promisin' all kinds of destruction. We appealed to the Sultan. But it didn't do any good. So at last, you know, we kind o' got our blood up about it. I can't explain it very well, and I shouldn't wonder if it would be harder still when I get to Washington. I don't know—things look sort of different with the thermometer two or three hundred in the shade and nothin' particular to do. Anyhow it riled us that those women should go on like that in spite of everything—and we the representatives of the greatest country in the world. So I concluded there was nothing for it but to take to gunpowder. I knew a little birdshot wouldn't hurt 'em."

"Gracious!" I exclaimed. "Did it?"

"I don't believe so," he answered. "But one of 'em didn't fancy it. You should have heard her yell! She went to our friend the Sultan



about it. It turned out that she was his wife." For the third time during this interview the voice of Mrs. Blakemore issued from the night.

"They all were!" she uttered sepulchrally.

"Yes," corroborated Blakemore. "He told us—afterward. He hadn't thought fit to mention it before. I couldn't blame 'em for bein' annoyed. It's a rude thing to do—to fire birdshot at ladies."

He settled back in his chair. It was the only sign he gave. As for me, I hardly knew what sign to give. I watched the rail heave slowly up and down across the stars. I heard the water wash against the side. I listened to the interwoven sound of voices and laughter and singing about us in the summer night, pervaded by the deep rhythm of the engines. And it seemed to me, through my repressed snickers, that this preposterous little story was preposterously like life. It was nothing but a farce. It would make its fortune if it fell into the right hands. But told as Blakemore told it, jerkily, without half bringing it out, betraying its real values in spite of himself, it did not solely incline me to mirth. It inclined me to several other things. Incidentally it inclined me to think that if you put a good God-fearing New England woman down on a blazing Arabic island, with too little to think about, there's no

telling what will happen. Something must, and it needn't necessarily make copy for Robert Hichens. The sense of it, and of us all on that lighted ship in the dark sea, sailing together for a few days, heaven only knew where and why, made me lapse off into a reverie of this queer improper world of ours, that is really no place for a lady, but that after all is something for to admire and for to see—where some of us are whited sepulchres, and some of us are lined with pink, and few of us can help it, and the best souls get put down as *persona non grata*, and funny stories lie behind cold official facts, and people may be as absurd as hippopotamuses and yet——

“Wouldn't you have done it yourself?” suddenly demanded Mrs. Blakemore.

I turned in surprise and saw the profile of this formidable woman against the light of a port-hole a little way down the deck. I knew it wasn't her fault if a dozen dusky queens were not at that minute lying cold in their graves. But—I don't know—it came over me that the variations on the theme of what a man will do for a woman are sometimes extremely strange. And I couldn't help wondering how this woman would look if she were turned inside out.

“Why, yes,” I heard myself answer. “I presume I would.”

## THE RIVER OF THE MOON

### I

**Y**ES, it's a very decent old gun. The chasing of silver on the stock couldn't be much better. And look at the line of that preposterous old bell mouth. It's a Cesarini—from Milan, you know; sixteenth century! More than one collector has tried to get it from me. But no one ever will—while I'm alive. I can't bear to sell my things, however much people offer for them. One has so much fun in getting them, and they become a part of the place—of one's self. I would as soon think of selling my children! And one likes them for all the things that must have happened to them. Whom do you suppose Cesarini made that chap for? And what wars did he fight in? And how did he ever happen to end in the Bazaar of Broussa? Not that he has ended yet. He has had one adventure since he came to live with me. And it was quite worthy of him.

Shall I really tell you? Beware! I have no mercy, once I get started on my yarns. However—the thing happened during the Balkan

war. It had nothing to do with the war, and yet it could not have happened if the town had been less upset. What a strange time that was! At the outset everybody was perfectly sure that the business could end only in one way. Then, when the bottom was knocked out of everything, we didn't know where we were or what would happen next.

For us foreigners, of course, there were alleviations of the general gloom. Different kinds of people came together a great deal more than they had before, in the common excitement and in their common sympathy for the sick and wounded. And while none of the usual big parties took place, there was a good deal going on unofficially by reason of the presence of the international squadron in the harbour. Half the girls in Pera ended by getting engaged to naval officers. There wasn't much fun for the natives, though, whether Christian or Turk. They were all in a tremendous funk, each side expecting to be cut up by the other, and waiting for the Bulgarians with different kinds of suspense. It must have been rather a new sensation for the Turks. I don't know how many of them I heard of who begged Europeans to take care of their families or their valuables. As for the Palace people, steam was kept up night and day on the imperial yacht, and it was only some

very plain speaking in high quarters that kept them from running away to Broussa. But they were all packed and ready. And it was a long time before the treasures of the Seraglio were put in order again, after that hasty boxing up.

Well, the state of affairs was such that I thought nothing when a man came to me one afternoon with a small parcel, and asked me if I would keep it for him till the "troubles" were over. It was a funny little parcel, wrapped up in the Turkish way in a bit of stuff—a figured silk shot with gold thread. As a matter of fact there it is! A pretty bit, isn't it? The man told me the parcel contained his savings and a few trinkets that belonged to his "family"—otherwise his wife. These people never trust a bank, you know. He was a Turk of thirty or thirty-five, with nothing very distinguishable about him except that he was plainly not an aristocrat. He seemed to be the sort of man who writes in his hand in the anterooms of ministries. He had a pleasant dark face, on the whole, and of course he was very polite.

I warned him that my house would be no safer than his own if anything really happened. He smilingly disagreed. I therefore consented to take his parcel. But I told him that I would accept no responsibility for it. If there was a general bust-up, or if the house was bombarded



or broken into, I couldn't be held for the value of what his parcel might contain. He was perfectly willing to let it be so. He said that God was great: if any house was spared, mine would be. He merely asked me to put the parcel in some safe place, and to give it to no one except himself. And when I proposed a receipt he wouldn't have one. He said I didn't know him but he knew me, and he needed no paper.

I was just beginning to expostulate with him, pointing out that things might happen to one or the other of us, when some one came in to see me. My man took leave at once, and for the moment I put his parcel in a drawer of my desk. My visitor brought me a new and rather startling rumour, and we talked over plans for the safety of the Anglo-American colony, if—— There was a question of a boat to take refuge on, you know, and patrols to be landed from the men-of-war, and I don't know what. There were a good many details to arrange and sensibilities to consider. We finally walked over to the embassy, and then we went on to the English embassy, and the long and the short of it was that I didn't go back to my study that night.

The first thing they told me the next morning was that my old gun was gone from its place on the wall. The servants had missed it when they cleaned the room. I was much put about, and

called everybody up to investigate. Nobody had seen or heard anything. No lock had been forced either, though there seemed to be a little haziness as to whether all the windows had been fastened. As for the servants themselves, I felt sure that none of them would take the gun. They had all been a long time in the place, like the gun itself. Why should they suddenly walk off with it? Then I thought of my man of the day before. Might he, by any chance, have hung about till he saw me go away and then have managed to get the gun without any one noticing him? Having remembered the man, I bethought me of his parcel, which I had intended to stow in the safe, but which I had put in my desk and completely forgotten.

I then discovered that the parcel was gone too—or the contents of it. The silk cover was still there in the drawer, neatly folded up. I was disgusted enough with myself for having been so careless. And I couldn't even let the man know. I had no idea what his name was, or his address, or anything about him. The only possible clue to him was that he had said he knew me, and that he looked like a government clerk. He might be an employee of one of the ministries where I was in the habit of going. His valuables were not likely to be very valuable, it was true, but he would probably be just as

sorry to lose them as I was to lose my Cesarini. It was rather funny, though, that the thief should have taken those two things and nothing else.

## II

I was inclined to make a fuss about my Cesarini. The police, when they came, inquired very particularly as to my age, and my father's name, and very carefully wrote down on a large piece of paper my answers to these and other pregnant questions. They also offered to arrest any or all of the servants—several of whom were Montenegrins, and therefore *personæ non gratae*. But they were too much preoccupied with the more immediate questions of the day to take very much interest in an old gun stolen out of the house of a foreigner.

In the afternoon I had occasion to go over to the Sublime Porte. And incidentally I looked over all the clerks I saw, in the hope of finding my man of the parcel. But there was no sign of him. When I was through with my business I drove on to the Bazaars. A good many of the things stolen in Constantinople end there, in the *Bezesten*. You know that murky old centre of the Bazaar, which opens later and closes earlier than the rest. I always like to go there—because of the way the light strikes dustily down

from the high windows, and the way silks and rugs and brasses and porcelain and old arms and every imaginable kind of junk are piled pellmell in raised stalls, and the way old gentlemen in gown and turban sit among them as if they didn't care whether you bought or not, but rather preferred to be saved the trouble of bargaining with you. One of them happened to be quite a friend of mine, and is to this day. He makes a specialty of mediæval arms. I told him, over a cup of coffee which I drank sitting cross-legged with him on a rug, that a valuable old Italian gun had been stolen from me and that if he happened to see or hear of any such thing he was to let me know. I also bought an Albanian *yataghan* from him, which I didn't pay for, just to keep on good terms.

After taking leave of Hassan Effendi I told my coachman to drive down to the Bridge and wait for me there. I thought I would walk down, to see how Stamboul was taking the war. I began my walk, as I am somewhat prone to do, by sitting down in the mosque-yard of Mahmoud Pasha. The time for that mosque-yard is summer rather than winter. But there was still sun in the air, there were a few leaves on the trees, and people as usual were lounging on rug-covered benches and smoking hubble-bubbles. I ordered one too. It is an old vice of mine.

As I sat there under the trees, adding the bubble of my water-pipe to the bubble that went on around me, listening to the scraps of talk that one hears in such a place, two soldiers came out of the mosque. They stopped a moment in the high old portico to pull on their boots, and then picked their way between the benches to one farther than mine from the main thoroughfare through the yard. One of them was a tall, thin, sullen-looking fellow with a frowzy red moustache and funny eyes. They looked as if they might be yellow. The other, I presently made out, was none other than my friend of the parcel. I watched them give their order and sit down—my man with his back toward me, the red-haired one facing me. He caught me looking. What is more, as soon as I got up and went toward them he slipped away through the nearest of the arched gates of the yard. I don't know how surprised my friend may have looked as he stared at the arch, but he certainly looked not a little surprised when he saw me. It did not strike me that he looked too pleased, either; nor was I delighted at the prospect of what I had to tell him. But I was also rather curious about his friend. And, naturally, I did not forget my gun. However, we exchanged the necessary greetings and I was invited to have a coffee.



"You will not wish to drink a coffee with me," I told him, "when you hear that I have lost your parcel."

I was right. His face changed instantly.

"Lost! How lost?" he asked. "Was it not in your house?"

"I am very sorry," I said, "but I was called away yesterday, as you saw. I did not go back to that room till this morning, and then I found the parcel was gone. Some one must have got in during the night."

I looked at him and he looked at me, each trying to get what he could from the other's face.

"Have—have you looked everywhere?" he stammered at last. "The servants—do you know them?"

"Better than I know you," I permitted myself to answer.

"And—have you told the police?"

"Yes. They came, and asked questions, and made a *journal*, and ——"

Before I had time to say anything else or tell the man about my own loss—and see how he would take it—he was off in turn through the arch by which his friend had vanished. What is more, he neglected to pay his bill, as the coffee-house man reminded me when I started after him. I paid it, and my own too, and felt rather a fool for being so slow. But by that

time there was no telling what had become of them, in that tangle of little streets. Besides, I have lived here so long that I have become rather a fatalist myself. If my Cesarini was destined to change hands once more in its long career, I told myself, I could not stop it. And if it was written that the Cesarini should come back, why come back it would—as you see it did! And after all it was rather pleasant to have something to think about besides the eternal politics of the hour.

I don't know whether my friend found his friend. But I did, no later than that night. There was a dinner on board the Angry Cat—as the English sailors amusingly called the French cruiser *Henri Quatre*. We had a first-rate dinner of course, and chit-chat afterward, and it was quite late when the Angry Kitten—otherwise the motor launch of the Angry Cat—started to put us ashore. We had still a good bit to go when shots cracked not far away, in the direction of the Bridge. We veered around to see what was up. When we arrived on the scene we were hailed rather sternly by a police boat; but they softened down when they saw the French sailors. I spoke to them in Turkish, too, and told them who we were, and asked if we could do anything. The spokesman of the police boat thanked me politely and said no, there was

nothing; he would not trouble us to stop. By which he meant he would trouble us to retire as promptly as we might. We accordingly did so. But we had had time to take in a curious scene.

The patrol boat lay to under the big black stern of a steamer. There was a buoy near by, and a covey of lighters, and the current slapped past them in the stillness. Beside the police boat was another rowboat, one of the *sandals* that ferry you back and forth across the harbour. In the light of an electric spark we saw a patrolman handcuffing the boatman of the *sandal*—a big black Laz who evidently did not like it—and the sprawling legs of a passenger at the stern. Then the light travelled up him and we saw he was lying flat back across the stern thwart, dead. And I recognized him with a jump as the frowzy red soldier I had seen that afternoon at Mahmoud Pasha. It gave me something more to think about. I looked for the man of the parcel, but I didn't see him. What I did see was another parcel, a big one, which the patrolman turned his attention to when he had handed the Laz over to his companions. The bundle was done up in canvas, which the patrolman ripped open with his knife. In the gash appeared something green.

"Smuggling?" I asked, as we started back.

"Eh," answered the man who had spoken be-

fore, "smuggling, deserting. It is nothing." And he turned to the man in the *sandal*. "Never mind now what is in the bundle. We can attend to that when we get back."

"If you find an old gun," I shouted, "let me know. Thieves broke into my place last night."

The Angry Kitten sputtered away toward Top Haneh. There was talk and speculation of course, and one Turkish soldier more or less made no essential difference to us. But I couldn't get the scene out of my head—the stern of the steamer half visible in the dark, the huddled lighters, the two boats, the stooping figures, and the ghastly soldier with the frowzy red moustache.

### III

The next morning a messenger came to me from the Prefect of the Port and asked if I would be good enough to go to his headquarters. Under ordinary circumstances, of course, the Prefect would give himself the pleasure of coming to me; but the circumstances were not quite ordinary, and if I could find it in me to waive ceremony—and so on. I was only too willing to go if the expedition would result, as I felt sure it would, in the recovery of my Cesarini. Moreover, I wanted to find out more about the affair, and I thought I might be able to contribute a

thread or two. I went down at once to the Prefecture of the Port, where I was received with extreme courtesy, taken into an inner sanctum, put into an uncomfortable red arm-chair, and treated to coffee and a catechism on the latest and most fantastic rumours of the war. You may be sure it was with some impatience that I submitted to it. But I have discovered that out here it pays to be a little diplomatic. By conforming to the customs of the country, especially in small matters of etiquette, you arrive at matters more essential sooner than by any Anglo-Saxon brusqueness.

Well, when coffee and politics were disposed of at last and cigarettes were well going, the Prefect excused himself a moment and retired to a small inner cupboard of a room. From it he brought back, not my Cesarini, as I expected, but an old dagger—of which the gold haft was tipped with a stupendous emerald. It was so huge that it looked like green glass; but why should anybody take the trouble to set green glass on such a dagger? The gold of the sheath was beautifully wrought with little arabesques and flowers, and in the curved steel of the blade was a gold marquetry inscription—a Persian distich, as I presently made out.

“Is that yours?” inquired the Prefect, politely handing me the dagger.



"Good heavens, no!" I replied. "I only wish it were! It was a gun I lost. Didn't you find it?"

"Ah!" he said, apparently disappointed. "Unfortunately not." And he added: "We heard it was a weapon. We thought, possibly——"

Tableau! It seemed to me delightfully characteristic of police in general and of Turkish police in particular. What they thought, heaven knows. Did they think that any American had such treasures to lose as that dagger? I have always thought, at any rate, that I was an ass not to claim it. But after the first instant of surprise I knew what the thing was and where it came from. It stupefied me that they should not know too.

"It belongs much more to you than to me," I said. "It came from the Treasury of the Seraglio."

"The Treasury!" he smiled. "Impossible!"

"Everything is possible in this world, my dear sir," I retorted—"even that a Turk should not know the dagger of Sultan Selim the Grim when he sees it. But if you don't believe me, send for Saïd Bey."

Saïd Bey is the curator of the Seraglio, and a charming old boy. My heart warmed to him from the day I saw him superintending the cutting down of a dead cypress near the library of

the palace, in such a way that it should not injure the marble of the kiosque or the smallest twig of neighbouring cypresses. And he instantly planted another one in exactly the same place.

The Prefect of the Port sent, not for Saïd Bey but for a colleague, with whom he gravely deliberated. Then they produced for my inspection an enormous piece of embroidery—flowers in colours and gold on white satin. It was the sort of thing you see on good Bulgarian towels, but better than anything I ever saw or dreamed of. It was lined, I noticed, with a thick green silk.

“Ah!” I said. “Is that what the things were wrapped up in?”

“Yes. Is it from the Treasury, too?”

That particular piece I didn’t remember, although I had seen other things like it. But I did remember a certain gold Greek coin that I had often envied, with a galloping quadriga on the reverse. There were a dozen or so fine coins. They also trotted out an aigrette set in rubies and diamonds, such as the sultans used to wear on the front of their turbans, and a robe or two of magnificent old stuff, and some gold filigree *zarfs*—coffee-cup holders—studded with precious stones, and pieces of porcelain similarly decorated, to say nothing of handfuls of loose

jewels. Even if I had not been perfectly sure about the dagger and the coin, the other things would have left me with not the slightest doubt. They could have come only from the Seraglio—though the merest fraction of a fraction of what is lost in that amazing place.

How they got into a *sandal* in the harbour, however, remained obscure even when the Prefect of the Port and I compared our respective notes on the red-haired man and his dark friend. I only learned that the former had been shot by accident, after the police hailed him and he refused to stop. Nor did the Treasury people, when they appeared on the scene, throw much more light on the subject. The red-haired man, whose body they were taken to look at, they knew nothing about. My man sounded like any one of several of their employees who had at different times enlisted or been drafted for the war. They asked me to see if I could identify him among those who remained; but he was not there. The only possible explanation of the robbery was that it had been committed during the hasty packing up of the treasures, against the arrival of General Savoff.

Saïd Bey's astonishment and chagrin were unbounded when he identified the loot at the Prefecture of the Port. But it was nearly the end of him when he eventually found out that

the loss was much greater than could be covered by the bundle of the *sandal*. And, worst of all, one of the missing objects was one of the glories of the Treasury—the matchless, the priceless pearl necklace of the Seraglio, the one picturesquely known as the River of the Moon. The like of it, I suppose, does not exist anywhere else in the world. Modern millionaires may have as much money as ancient emperors, but they have, after all, more conscience and less imagination. And certainly few necklaces have had such a history. The River of the Moon first came to light in Ispahan, where Shah Abbas the Great collected its seventy-seven enormous pearls and hung them around the neck of one of his queens. A hundred years later Sultan Mourad IV brought it in triumph to Constantinople among the spoil of his Persian wars. Sultanas wore it and sighed for it in the Seraglio. In our own time Abd-ül-Hamid, that great lover and connoisseur of jewels, took it to Yildîz—with a good many other things he had no personal right to. When his jewels were sent to Paris to be sold, the River of the Moon went with them, by mistake, and a special embassy was sent to bring it back—to the no small disgust of the people in Paris. And now it was gone—no one knew where.

I believe that Saïd Bey would have preferred

that the empire had gone. He begged me to say nothing till the fullest possible investigation could be made. Of course I told him, too, my part of the story, and showed him my bit of figured silk. He said that it was very good, but didn't come from the Treasury. I could not help wondering, however, if I had been a receiver of stolen goods, and if I had not held in my hand, without knowing it, the River of the Moon.

## IV

So I didn't get my Cesarini back that time. That, to me, was the more important loss, though for the rest of them it was of course forgotten in the greater loss of the Treasury. But I did get it in the end, as you see. It was a long time afterward, when the war was over, and the international squadron had gone, and the young ladies in Pera were married to their officers, and the rest of us settled down to the humdrum treadmill of life. I used to go over to the *Bezesten* every now and then and interview my friend Hassan Effendi. He never got wind of my gun. He was indefatigable, however, in trying to console me with other antiques, of one kind or another. And I can't say that I was always strong-minded enough to resist him.

He told me one day about an "occasion" he had heard of. There was a refugee woman over



in Scutari somewhere who had a few things to sell. They were quite good, he heard—if any of them were left. The lady's husband had been a great man in his country, in Macedonia, and they had been ruined by the war. If I liked to go with him and see what there was to see, a man he knew would take us.

I jumped at the chance. Some of my friends who did relief work among the refugees picked up very decent things—embroideries chiefly—at ridiculous prices. It was a charity to the poor creatures to take them off their hands! Accordingly I arranged with Hassan Effendi to call his man and take me over on the next Friday, when the *Bezesten* would be closed.

We had quite a time. The house was at the top of the town, near the big cemetery. Our guide made us leave the carriage before we got to it, saying that the street was too narrow and too badly paved to drive through. When we reached the door we knocked an age before any one answered, and then there was discreet calling to know who we were and what we wanted, and much flipflapping of slippers; and finally the door opened six inches and we squeezed into a little court with a well and half a dozen chrysanthemum pots. We took off our shoes and walked up a clean little pair of stairs into a clean little room where there was a divan and a

charcoal brazier and a cat—not an angry one. We sat down on the divan and played with the cat, and presently the door opened far enough to admit a tray and three cups of coffee. In the course of time the tray was passed back and parley exchanged with a preternaturally high voice. Old-fashioned Turkish ladies affect that tone. And after hesitations, and assurances that there was nothing in the house worth looking at, what should I see poked through the crack of the door but my Cesarini!

Hassan Effendi, being nearest the door, took it. As for me, I was so surprised that I had time to remember to hold my tongue. When Hassan Effendi put the gun into my hands I saw that it had been badly used. It was rusty and battered, and there seemed something unfamiliar about it. But there could be no doubt of its being my Cesarini. Before I had finished looking it over, our invisible hostess sidled into the room. She went to the brazier and poked it a bit with those funny little iron tongs they have, and then she flopped down on the floor. If there was to be a bargain I suppose she wanted to have a hand in it. All we saw of her was a pair of rather fine black eyes and a hand with henna'ed nails that held her shabby black *charshaf* in front of her mouth.

“This is rather an interesting old piece of

yours, *Hanîm*," I remarked. "May I ask where you got it?"

"It belonged to my husband," she answered in her strange high voice. "He went to the war." And she jerked her *charshaf* up to her fine eyes, which filled with tears.

They did not soften me too much.

"This does not seem to be Turkish work," I went on.

"I am a refugee," came from behind the *charshaf*. "We lived in Üsküb. The work there is different. There are many Albanians."

"Oh!" I exclaimed. I knew the thing to do was to buy back the gun and go quietly away and call the police, but an irresistible temptation came to me. I got up as if to examine the gun in a better light. I stayed up, in front of the door. "Excuse me, *Hanîm*," I began, "but did your husband have red hair? I think I knew him a little."

The *charshaf* descended far enough to reveal one of the fine eyes.

"No!" the owner of it, after a moment, very decidedly replied.

"Ah! Then it was your husband who took the parcel to a house in Pera. He did not say he came from Üsküb."

The fine eye regarded me very fixedly, and I regarded the fine eye.

"Perhaps you did not know," I hazarded, "that this gun came from the same house, and was taken from it on the same night as the parcel. Perhaps you thought it came from the—place where the other things came from."

It seemed to me that the fine eye measured the relative distances of itself and myself from the door. At all events it presently disappeared behind the *charshaf* for inward consideration.

"But there are one or two things I don't understand," I pursued—"such as how your husband got the gun. For he was not in the boat when the red-haired man—died, and neither was the gun."

Hassan Effendi and the other man began to show such signs of interest in this somewhat one-sided dialogue that I regretted having started it. As for the fine eye, it still remained in seclusion. But the high voice finally vouchsafed, in defense:

"That was not the work of my husband. The other man threw it into a lighter just before——"

"Ah!" I exclaimed, a light breaking upon me. "Then there were two bundles! And that was what happened to the necklace!"

Both eyes emerged from the *charshaf*.

"No, they got that."

"No, they didn't get that," I contradicted. "They are still looking for it."

The fine eyes stared so indubitably that I wondered if my light had been a false one. Then another light came into them.

"So he would have lost it after all, the dog-born dog! It was all his work. My husband never would have thought of it without him. And afterward he watched my husband go to Pera, and he stole that thing too. And then he tried to run away——"

The light in the fine eyes darkened to sudden tears, and this time sobs shook the *charshaf* that covered them. I could see well enough now what had happened—though the woman had not told me all that it might be interesting to know about her husband and the red-haired man, and there were details of the history of the gun during its journey from the lighter to my hands that might be filled out in several ways. But I was an idiot to try the third degree myself—and bungle it; for it would be harder now to get the police, or for them to find out just who our guide might be. He sat there quietly enough while the woman cried on the floor and I stood in front of the door and wondered if the River of the Moon were around her neck all the time, or whether the red-haired man had got rid of it, and what I ought to do.



I fingered the gun as I wondered, trying not to look as much of a fool as I felt. Incidentally I found out why the gun had seemed unfamiliar. It was heavier than I remembered it. And then I discovered that it was loaded. At least, some kind of wadding had been rammed into the barrel. I started picking at it, as well as I could from the bell mouth. In the end, you know, it wasn't pure nervousness. It was pure inspiration. When I couldn't get my hand in any farther I took the tongs from the brazier. The last of the stuff was jammed in pretty hard. But those blessed little tongs were just the thing for it. And finally out rolled a prodigious pearl, and after it rolled a whole river of them—the River of the Moon!

The sudden patter of the pearls on the floor made the woman look up. And what a look it was, as the poor wretch realized what had been in her hands and what she had lost! To be sure she began grabbing up the pearls as fast as she could. And so did Hassan Effendi and the other man. You should have seen the scramble. Even the cat went for them, and thought it great fun. I stopped the patter as soon as I could, and emptied the rest of the pearls into my handkerchief. Hassan Effendi put his there too.

"And you?" I said, turning to our guide.

"Excuse me, *Effendim*," he began, "you bought the gun, not the pearls."

I gave him a look and an answer.

"I have bought nothing yet. This is my own gun, which was stolen from my house. And these pearls were stolen too—from the Sultan. And the Sultan's arm is long. And if you say one word, or refuse to give back one pearl, Hassan Effendi has only to clap his hands and fifty men will break into the house."

I don't know whether he believed me or not. But he saw that I knew more than he had thought, and Hassan Effendi had the grace not to look astonished. The man put down his pearls. The woman did likewise.

"Now tell me," I said to her, "have you anything else?"

"No," she answered.

"I suppose you have sold the rest, eh?"

"No, *vallah!*" she insisted. "If there was anything, the lightermen took it. We heard there was talk among them and we went to them. We knew—— And then my husband went away," she continued hastily, "and they brought me only this gun."

She covered her face again and began to cry.

There was something queer about it. But I had found my Cesarini, and the River of the Moon, and it seemed to me that the woman was

punished enough—and for what very likely was not her fault. Neither she nor her husband, at all events, had stolen my gun. Accordingly I offered her a tip, which she wouldn't take. So I put it down on the sofa, and patted the cat, and gave our guide a bit of a scare by making him come away with Hassan Effendi and me.

But, really, you know—! Of course it is a notorious thing that collectors have no consciences, and will rob the fatherless and the widow without turning a hair, if so be they can cheat them over the price—of an old print. I did it myself no later than last week, when I came across some Piranesis at the sale of the goods of a deceased Italian barber, whose family were going home. They were real ones, too, and not the reprints the Italian government has made from Piranesi's plates. Not many other people thought it worth while to go to a barber's sale, and the ones that did thought nothing of some black old pictures of an unfamiliar Rome. Our good Perotes, you know, are not very much up on that sort of thing. So I had the courage to march away with the ten of them at five piasters apiece. But until I looked at those pearls by myself at home I never realized how shallow-rooted a virtue honesty may be. If I hadn't taken such a high moral tone about them, and, especially, if three people and a cat

didn't know I had them, I don't believe I could have given them back.

They were perfectly lovely in themselves, like great drops of crystallized moonlight. And it was so strange to hold them in one's hand, and wonder what divers first brought them out of the Persian Gulf or the Indian Ocean, and by what extraordinary roads they had come together in Ispahan, and on what soft breasts they had lain, and what splendour and blood and mystery they had seen. Each one of them must have been fatal to some hand that had held it. And each one of them was the equivalent of so much release from struggle and anxiety, the equivalent of so much leisure, so much beauty, so much joy, so much of everything that people really want in this world—each one! While the whole lot of them—— It made one's head turn.

When I came to count them I discovered there was one missing. I couldn't find it in my pocket, I couldn't find it in my gun, I couldn't find it anywhere. I finally concluded that it must have rolled under the sofa in Scutari, and I nearly rushed back to get it. But then I remembered how the woman had looked when she saw the pearls dropping out of the gun. I had a fellow feeling for her. I knew in my heart that it was only an accident if I was any better than she.

I decided to give her and the cat the chance of finding it.

The first thing the next morning, I took the River of the Moon back to Saïd Bey. It was not safe with me an instant longer. The old boy nearly went silly when he saw the pearls. He knew every one by its size and weight and some invisible individuality. He was so delighted to get the seventy-six that he made no bones about the seventy-seventh, or my cock-and-bull story of having promised on his behalf that no questions should be asked. I did drop a discreet hint, though, about the guild of the lightermen.

They made quite an international incident of it—not the lightermen, but the Palace people. They gave me a decoration. But I thought the woman in Scutari had the best of the bargain.



## IN THE PASHA'S GARDEN

*At the old gentleman's side sat a young lady more beautiful than pomegranate blossoms, more exquisite than the first quarter moon viewed at twilight through the tops of oleanders.*

—O. Henry: THE TRIMMED LAMP.

### I

AS THE caïque glided up to the garden gate the three boatmen rose from their sheepskins and caught hold of iron clamps set into the marble of the quay. Shaban, the grizzled gatekeeper, who was standing at the top of the water-steps with his hands folded respectfully in front of him, came salaaming down to help his master out.

"Shall we wait, my Pasha?" asked the head *kaïkji*.

The Pasha turned to Shaban, as if to put a question. And as if to answer it Shaban said:

"The Madama is up in the wood, in the kiosque. She sent down word to ask if you would go up too."

"Then don't wait." Returning the boatmen's salaam, the Pasha stepped into his garden. "Is

there company in the kiosque or is Madama alone?" he inquired.

"I think no one is there—except Zümbül Agha," replied Shaban, following his master up the long central path of black and white pebbles.

"Zümbül Agha!" exclaimed the Pasha. But if it had been in his mind to say anything else he stooped instead to sniff at a rosebud. And then he asked: "Are we dining up there, do you know?"

"I don't know, my Pasha, but I will find out."

"Tell them to send up dinner anyway, Shaban. It is such an evening! And just ask Moustafa to bring me a coffee at the fountain, will you? I will rest a little before climbing that hill."

"On my head!" said the Albanian, turning off to the house.

The Pasha kept on to the end of the walk. Two big horse-chestnut trees, their candles just starting alight in the April air, stood there at the foot of a terrace, guarding a fountain that dripped in the ivied wall. A thread of water started mysteriously out of the top of a tall marble niche into a little marble basin, from which it overflowed by two flat bronze spouts into two smaller basins below. From them the

water dripped back into a single basin still lower down, and so tinkled its broken way, past graceful arabesques and reliefs of fruit and flowers, into a crescent-shaped pool at the foot of the niche.

The Pasha sank down into one of the wicker chairs scattered hospitably beneath the horse-chestnut trees, and thought how happy a man he was to have a fountain of the period of Sultan Ahmed III, and a garden so full of April freshness, and a view of the bright Bosphorus and the opposite hills of Europe and the firing West. How definitely he thought it I cannot say, for the Pasha was not greatly given to thought. Why should he be, since he possessed without that trouble a goodly share of what men acquire by taking thought? If he had been lapped in ease and security all his days, they numbered many more, did those days, than the Pasha would have chosen. Still, they had touched him but lightly, merely increasing the dignity of his handsome presence and taking away nothing of his power to enjoy his little walled world.

So he sat there, breathing in the air of the place and the hour, while gardeners came and went with their watering-pots, and birds twittered among the branches, and the fountain plashed beside him, until Shaban reappeared

carrying a glass of water and a cup of coffee in a swinging tray.

"Eh, Shaban! It is not your business to carry coffee!" protested the Pasha, reaching for a stand that stood near him.

"What is your business is my business, *Pasha'm*. Have I not eaten your bread and your father's for thirty years?"

"No! Is it as long as that? We are getting old, Shaban."

"We are getting old," assented the Albanian simply.

The Pasha thought, as he took out his silver cigarette-case, of another Pasha who had complimented him that afternoon on his youthfulness. And, choosing a cigarette, he handed the case to his gatekeeper. Shaban accepted the cigarette and produced matches from his gay girdle.

"How long is it since you have been to your country, Shaban?"

The Pasha, lifting his little cup by its silver *zarf*, realized that he would not have sipped his coffee quite so noisily had his French wife been sitting with him under the horse-chestnut trees. But with his old Shaban he could still be a Turk.

"Eighteen months, my Pasha."

"And when are you going again?"

"In Ramazan, if God wills. Or perhaps next Ramazan. We shall see."

"Allah Allah! How many times have I told you to bring your people here, Shaban? We have plenty of room to build you a house somewhere, and you could see your wife and children every day instead of once in two or three years."

"Wives, mives—a man will not die if he does not see them every day! Besides, it would not be good for the children. In Constantinople they become rascals. There are too many Christians." And he added hastily: "It is better for a boy to grow up in the mountains."

"But we have a mountain here, behind the house," laughed the Pasha.

"Your mountain is not like our mountains," objected Shaban gravely, hunting in his mind for the difference he felt but could not express.

"And that new wife of yours," went on the Pasha. "Is it good to leave a young woman like that? Are you not afraid?"

"No, my Pasha. I am not afraid. We all live together, you know. My brothers watch, and the other women. She is safer than yours. Besides, in my country it is not as it is here."

"I don't know why I have never been to see this wonderful country of yours, Shaban. I have so long intended to, and I never have been. But I must climb my mountain or they will



think I have become a rascal too." And, rising from his chair, he gave the Albanian a friendly pat.

"Shall I come too, my Pasha? Zümbül Agha sent word——"

"Zümbül Agha!" interrupted the Pasha irritably. "No, you needn't come. I will explain to Zümbül Agha."

With which he left Shaban to pick up the empty coffee cup.

## II

From the upper terrace a bridge led across the public road to the wood. If it was not a wood it was at all events a good-sized grove, climbing the steep hillside very much as it chose. Every sort and size of tree was there, but the greater number of them were of a kind to be sparsely trimmed in April with a delicate green, and among them were so many twisted Judas trees as to tinge whole patches of the slope with their deep rose bloom. The road that the Pasha slowly climbed, swinging his amber beads behind him as he walked, zigzagged so leisurely back and forth among the trees that a carriage could have driven up it. In that way, indeed, the Pasha had more than once mounted to the kiosque, in the days when his mother used to spend a good part of her summer up

there, and when he was married to his first wife. The memory of the two, and of their old-fashioned ways, entered not too bitterly into his general feeling of well-being, ministered to by the budding trees and the spring air and the sunset view. Every now and then an enormous plane tree invited him to stop and look at it, or a semi-circle of cypresses.

So at last he came to the top of the hill, where in a grassy clearing a small house looked down on the valley of the Bosphorus through a row of great stone pines. The door of the kiosque was open, but his wife was not visible. The Pasha stopped a moment, as he had done a thousand times before, and looked back. He was not the man to be insensible to what he saw between the columnar trunks of the pines, where European hills traced a dark curve against the fading sky, and where the sinuous waterway far below still reflected a last glamour of the day. The beauty of it, and the sharp sweetness of the April air, and the infinitesimal sounds of the wood, and the half-conscious memories involved with it all, made him sigh. He turned and mounted the steps of the porch.

The kiosque looked very dark and unfamiliar as the Pasha entered it. He wondered what had become of *Hélène*—if by any chance he had passed her on the way. He wanted her. She

was the expression of what the evening roused in him. He heard nothing, however, but the splash of water from a half-invisible fountain. It reminded him for an instant of the other fountain, below, and of Shaban. His steps resounded hollowly on the marble pavement as he walked into the dim old saloon, shaped like a T, with the crossbar longer than the leg. It was still light enough for him to make out the glimmer of windows on three sides and the square of the fountain in the centre, but the painted domes above were lost in shadow.

The spaces on either side of the bay by which he entered, completing the rectangle of the kiosque, were filled by two little rooms opening into the cross of the T. He went into the left-hand one, where Hélène usually sat—because there were no lattices. The room was empty. The place seemed so strange and still in the twilight that a sort of apprehension began to grow in him, and he half wished he had brought up Shaban. He turned back to the second, the latticed room—the harem, as they called it. Curiously enough it was Hélène who would never let him Europeanize it, in spite of the lattices. Every now and then he found out that she liked some Turkish things better than he did. As soon as he opened the door he saw her sitting on the divan opposite. He knew her profile

against the checkered pallor of the lattice. But she neither moved nor greeted him. It was Zümbül Agha who did so, startling him by suddenly rising beside the door and saying in his high voice:

"Pleasant be your coming, my Pasha."

The Pasha had forgotten about Zümbül Agha; and it seemed strange to him that Hélène continued to sit silent and motionless on her sofa.

"Good evening," he said at last. "You are sitting very quietly here in the dark. Are there no lights in this place?"

It was again Zümbül Agha who spoke, turning one question by another:

"Did Shaban come with you?"

"No," replied the Pasha shortly. "He said he had a message, but I told him not to come."

"A-ah!" ejaculated the eunuch in his high drawl. "But it does not matter—with the two of us."

The Pasha grew more and more puzzled, for this was not the scene he had imagined to himself as he came up through the park in response to his wife's message. Nor did he grow less puzzled when the eunuch turned to her and said in another tone:

"Now will you give me that key?"

The French woman took no more notice of

this question than she had of the Pasha's entrance.

"What do you mean, Zümbül Agha?" demanded the Pasha sharply. "That is not the way to speak to your mistress."

"I mean this, my Pasha," retorted the eunuch—"that some one is hiding in this chest and that Madama keeps the key."

That was what the Pasha heard, in the absurd treble of the black man, in the darkening room. He looked down and made out, beside the tall figure of the eunuch, the chest on which he had been sitting. Then he looked across at Hélène, who still sat silent in front of the lattice.

"What are you talking about?" he asked at last, more stupefied than anything else. "Who is it? A thief? Has any one——?" He left the vague question unformulated, even in his mind.

"Ah, that I don't know. You must ask Madama. Probably it is one of her Christian friends. But at least if it were a woman she would not be so unwilling to unlock her chest for us!"

The silence that followed, while the Pasha looked dumbly at the chest, and at Zümbül Agha, and at his wife, was filled for him with a stranger confusion of feelings than he had ever experienced before. Nevertheless he was sur-



prisingly cool, he found. His pulse quickened very little. He told himself that it wasn't true and that he really must get rid of old Zümbül after all, if he went on making such preposterous *gaffes* and setting them all by the ears. How could anything so baroque happen to him, the Pasha, who owed what he was to honourable fathers and who had passed his life honourably and peaceably until this moment? Yet he had had an impression, walking into the dark old kiosque and finding nobody until he found these two sitting here in this extraordinary way—as if he had walked out of his familiar garden, that he knew like his hand, into a country he knew nothing about, where anything might be true. And he wished, he almost passionately wished, that Hélène would say something, would cry out against Zümbül Agha, would lie even, rather than sit there so still and removed and different from other women.

Then he began to be aware that if it were true—if!—he ought to do something. He ought to make a noise. He ought to kill somebody. That was what they always did. That was what his father would have done, or certainly his grandfather. But he also told himself that it was no longer possible for him to do what his father and grandfather had done. He had been

unlearning their ways too long. Besides, he was too old.

A sudden sting pierced him at the thought of how old he was, and how young Hélène. Even if he lived to be seventy or eighty she would still have a life left when he died. Yes, it was as Shaban said. They were getting old. He had never really felt the humiliation of it before. And Shaban had said, strangely, something else—that his own wife was safer than the Pasha's. Still he felt an odd compassion for Hélène, too—because she was young, and it was Judas-tree time, and she was married to gray hairs. And although he was a Pasha, descended from great Pashas, and she was only a little French girl *quelconque*, he felt more afraid than ever of making a fool of himself before her—when he had promised her that she should be as free as any other European woman, that she should live her life. Besides, what had the black man to do with their private affairs?

“Zümbül Agha,” he suddenly heard himself harshly saying, “is this your house or mine? I have told you a hundred times that you are not to trouble the Madama, or follow her about, or so much as guess where she is and what she is doing. I have kept you in the house because my father brought you into it; but if I ever hear of you speaking to Madama again, or spy-

ing on her, I will send you into the street. Do you hear? Now get out!"

"*Aman*, my Pasha! I beg you!" entreated the eunuch. There was something ludicrous in his voice, coming as it did from his height.

The Pasha wondered if he had been too long a person of importance in the family to realize the change in his position, or whether he really——

All of a sudden a checkering of lamplight flickered through the dark window, touched the Negro's black face for a moment, travelled up the wall. Silence fell again in the little room—a silence into which the fountain dropped its silver patter. Then steps mounted the porch and echoed in the other room, which lighted in turn, and a man came in sight, peering this way and that, with a big white accordeon lantern in his hand. Behind the man two other servants appeared, carrying on their heads round wooden trays covered by figured silks, and a boy tugging a huge basket. When they discovered the three in the little room they salaamed respectfully.

"Where shall we set the table?" asked the man with the lantern.

For the Pasha the lantern seemed to make the world more like the place he had always known. He turned to his wife, apologetically.

"I told them to send dinner up here. It has

been such a long time since we came. But I forgot about the table. I don't believe there is one here."

"No," uttered Hélène from her sofa, sitting with her head on her hand.

It was the first word she had spoken. But, little as it was, it reassured him, like the lantern.

"There is the chest," hazarded Zümbül Agha.

The interruption of the servants had for the moment distracted them all. But the Pasha now turned on him so vehemently that the eunuch salaamed in haste and went away.

"Why not?" asked Hélène, when he was gone. "We can sit on the cushions."

"Why not?" echoed the Pasha. Grateful as he was for the interruption, he found himself wishing, secretly, that Hélène had discouraged his idea of a picnic dinner. And he could not help feeling a certain constraint as he gave the necessary orders and watched the servants put down their paraphernalia and pull the chest into the middle of the room. There was something unreal and stage-like about the scene, in the uncertain light of the lantern. Obviously the chest was not light. It was an old cypress-wood chest that they had always used in the summer, to keep things in, polished a bright brown, with a little inlaid pattern of dark brown and cream colour running around the edge of

each surface, and a more complicated design ornamenting the centre of the cover. He vaguely associated his mother with it. He felt a distinct relief when the men spread the cloth. He felt as if they had covered up more things than he could name. And when they produced candlesticks and candles, and set them on the improvised table and in the niches beside the door, he seemed to come back again into the comfortable light of common sense.

"This is the way we used to do when I was a boy," he said with a smile, when he and Hélène established themselves on sofa cushions on opposite sides of the chest. "Only then we had little tables six inches high, instead of big ones like this."

"It is rather a pity that we have spoiled all that," she said. "Are we any happier for perching on chairs around great scaffoldings, and piling the scaffoldings with so many kinds of porcelain and metal? After all, they knew how to live—the people who were capable of imagining a place like this. And they had the good taste not to fill a room with things. Your grandfather, was it?"

He had had a dread that she would not say anything, that she would remain silent and impenetrable as she had been before Zümbül Agha, as if the chest between them were a bar-



rier that nothing could surmount. His heart lightened when he heard her speak. Was it not quite her natural voice?

"It was my great-grandfather, the Grand Vizier. They say he did know how to live—in his way. He built the kiosque for a beautiful slave of his, a Greek, whom he called Pomegranate."

"Madame Pomegranate! What a charming name! And that is why her cipher is everywhere. See?" She pointed to the series of cupboards and niches on either side of the door, dimly painted with pomegranate blossoms, and to the plaster reliefs around the hooded fireplace, and to the cluster of pomegranates that made a centre to the gilt and painted lattice-work of the ceiling. "One could be very happy in such a little house. It has an air—of being meant for moments. And you feel as if they had something to do with the wonderful way it has faded." She looked as if she had meant to say something else, which she did not. But after a moment she added: "Will you ask them to turn off the water in the fountain? It is a little chilly, now that the sun has gone, and it sounds like rain—or tears."

The dinner went, on the whole, not so badly. There were dishes to be passed back and forth. There were questions to be asked or comments

to be made. There were the servants to be spoken to. Yet, more and more, the Pasha could not help wondering. When a silence fell, too, he could not help listening. And least of all could he help looking at Hélène. He looked at her, trying not to look at her, with an intense curiosity, as if he had never seen her before, asking himself if there were anything new in her face, and how she would look if—— Would she be like this? She made no attempt to keep up a flow of words, as if to distract his attention. She was not soft either; she was not trying to seduce him. And she made no show of gratitude toward him for having sent Zümbül Agha away. Neither did she by so much as an inflection try to insinuate or excuse or explain. She was what she always was, perfect—and evidently a little tired. She was indeed more than perfect, she was prodigious, when he asked her once what she was thinking about and she said Pandora, tapping the chest between them. He had never heard the story of that other Greek girl and her box, and she told him gravely about all the calamities that came out of it, and the one gift of hope that remained behind.

“But I cannot be a Turkish woman long!” she added inconsequently with a smile. “My legs are asleep. I really must walk about a little.”

When he had helped her to her feet she led

the way into the other room. They had their coffee and cigarettes there. Hélène walked slowly up and down the length of the room, stopping every now and then to look into the square pool of the fountain and to pat her hair.

The Pasha sat down on the long low divan that ran under the windows. He could watch her more easily now. And the detachment with which he had begun to look at her grew in spite of him into the feeling that he was looking at a stranger. After all, what did he know about her? Who was she? What had happened to her, during all the years that he had not known her, in that strange free European life which he had tried to imitate, and which at heart he secretly distrusted? What had she ever really told him, and what had he ever really divined of her? For perhaps the first time in his life he realized how little one person may know of another, and particularly a man of a woman. And he remembered Shaban again, and that phrase about his wife being safer than Hélène. Had Shaban really meant anything? Was Hélène "safe"? He acknowledged to himself at last that the question was there in his mind, waiting to be answered.

Hélène did not help him. She had been standing for some time at an odd angle to the pool,

looking into it. He could see her face there, with the eyes turned away from him.

"How mysterious a reflection is!" she said. "It is so real that you can't believe it disappears for good. How often Madame Pomegranate must have looked into this pool, and yet I can't find her in it. But I feel she is really there, all the same—and who knows who else."

"They say mirrors do not flatter," the Pasha did not keep himself from rejoining, "but they are very discreet. They tell no tales!"

Hélène raised her eyes. In the little room the servants had cleared the improvised table and had packed up everything again except the candles.

"I have been up here a long time," she said, "and I am rather tired. It is a little cold, too. If you do not mind I think I will go down to the house now, with the servants. You will hardly care to go so soon, for Zümbül Agha has not finished what he has to say to you."

"Zümbül Agha!" exclaimed the Pasha. "I sent him away."

"Ah, but you must know him well enough to be sure he would not go. Let us see." She clapped her hands. The servant of the lantern immediately came out to her. "Will you ask Zümbül Agha to come here?" she said. "He is on the porch."

The man went to the door, looked out, and said a word. Then he stood aside with a respectful salaam, and the eunuch entered. He negligently returned the salute and walked forward until his air of importance changed to one of humility at sight of the Pasha. Salaaming in turn, he stood with his hands folded in front of him.

"I will go down with you," said the Pasha to his wife, rising. "It is too late for you to go through the woods in the dark."

"Nonsense!" She gave him a look that had more in it than the tone in which she added: "Please do not. I shall be perfectly safe with four servants. You can tell them not to let me run away." Coming nearer, she put her hand into the bosom of her dress, then stretched out the hand toward him. "Here is the key—the key of which Zümbül Agha spoke—the key of Pandora's box. Will you keep it for me please? *Au revoir.*"

And making a sign to the servants she walked out of the kiosque.

### III

The Pasha was too surprised, at first, to move—and too conscious of the eyes of servants, too uncertain of what he should do, too fearful of doing the wrong, the un-European, thing. And



afterward it was too late. He stood watching until the flicker of the lantern disappeared among the dark trees. Then his eyes met the eunuch's.

"Why don't you go down too?" suggested Zümbül Agha. The variable climate of a great house had made him too perfect an opportunist not to take the line of being in favour again. "It might be better. Give me the key and I will do what there is to do. But you might send up Shaban."

Why not, the Pasha secretly asked himself? Might it not be the best way out? At the same time he experienced a certain revulsion of feeling, now that Hélène was gone, in the way she had gone. She really was prodigious! And with the vanishing of the lantern that had brought him a measure of reassurance he felt the weight of an uncleared situation, fantastic but crucial, heavy upon him. And the Negro annoyed him intensely.

"Thank you, Zümbül Agha," he replied, "but I am not the nurse of Madama, and I will not give you the key."

If he only might, though, he thought to himself again!

"You believe her, this Frank woman whom you had never seen five years ago, and you do not believe me who have lived in your house longer than you can remember!"

The eunuch said it so bitterly that the Pasha was touched in spite of himself. He had never been one to think very much about minor personal relations, but even at such a moment he could see—was it partly because he wanted more time to make up his mind?—that he had never liked Zümbül Agha as he liked Shaban, for instance. Yet more honour had been due, in the old family tradition, to the former. And he had been associated even longer with the history of the house.

“My poor Zümbül,” he uttered musingly, “you have never forgiven me for marrying her.”

“My Pasha, you are not the first to marry an unbeliever, nor the last. But such a marriage should be to the glory of Islam, and not to its discredit. Who can trust her? She is still a Christian. And she is too young. She has turned the world upside down. What would your father have said to a daughter-in-law who goes shamelessly into the street without a veil, alone, and who receives in your house men who are no relation to you or to her? It is not right. Women understand only one thing—to make fools of men. And they are never content to fool one.”

The Pasha, still waiting to make up his mind, let his fancy linger about Zümbül Agha. It was really rather absurd, after all, what a part

women played in the world, and how little it all came to in the end! Did the black man, he wondered, walk in a clearer cooler world, free of the clouds, the iridescences, the languors, the perfumes, the strange obsessions, that made others walk so often like madmen? Or might some tatter of preposterous humanity still work obscurely in him? Or a bitterness of not being like other men? That perhaps was why the Pasha felt friendlier toward Shaban. They were more alike.

"You are right, Zümbül Agha," he said. "The world is upside down. But neither the Madama nor any of us made it so. All we can do is to try and keep our heads as it turns. Now, will you please tell me how you happened to be up here? The Madama never told you to come. You know perfectly well that the customs of Europe are different from ours, and that she does not like to have you follow her about."

"What woman likes to be followed about?" retorted the eunuch with a sly smile. "I know you have told me to leave her alone. But why was I brought into this house? Am I to stand by and watch dishonour brought upon it simply because you have eaten the poison of a woman?"

"Zümbül Agha," replied the Pasha sharply, "I am not discussing old and new or this and

that, but I am asking you to tell me what all this speech is about."

"Give me that key and I will show you what it is about," said the eunuch, stepping forward.

But the Pasha found he was not ready to go so directly to the point.

"Can't you answer a simple question?" he demanded irritably, retreating to the farther side of the fountain.

The reflection of the painted ceiling in the pool made him think of Hélène—and Madame Pomegranate. He stared into the still water as if to find Hélène's face there. Was any other face hidden beside it, mocking him?

But Zümbül Agha had begun again, doggedly:

"I came here because it is my business to be here. I went to town this morning. When I got back they told me that you were away and that the Madama was up here, alone. So I came. Is this a place for a woman to be alone in—a young woman, with men working all about and I don't know who, and a thousand ways of getting in and out from the hills, and ten thousand hiding places in the woods?"

The Pasha made a gesture of impatience, and turned away. But after all, what could one do with old Zümbül? He had been brought up in his tradition. The Pasha lighted another cigarette to help himself think.

"Well, I came up here," continued the eunuch, "and as I came I heard Madama singing. You know how she sings the songs of the Franks."

The Pasha knew. But he did not say anything. As he walked up and down, smoking and thinking, his eye caught in the pool a reflection from the other side of the room, where the door of the latticed room was and where the cypress-wood chest stood as the servants had left it in the middle of the floor. Was that what Hélène had stood looking at so long, he asked himself? He wondered that he could have sat beside it so quietly. It seemed now like something dark and dangerous crouching there in the shadow of the little room.

"I sat down, under the terrace," he heard the eunuch go on, "where no one could see me, and I listened. And after she had stopped I heard——"

"Never mind what you heard," broke in the Pasha. "I have heard enough."

He was ashamed—ashamed and resolved. He felt as if he had been playing the spy with Zümbül Agha. And after all there was a very simple way to answer his question for himself. He threw away his cigarette, went forward into the little room, bent over the chest, and fitted the key into the lock.

Just then a nightingale burst out singing, but



so near and so loud that he started and looked over his shoulder. In an instant he collected himself, feeling the black man's eyes upon him. Yet he could not suppress the train of association started by the impassioned trilling of the bird, even as he began to turn the key of the chest where his mother used to keep her quaint old silks and embroideries. The irony of the contrast paralyzed his hand for a strange moment, and of the difference between this spring night and other spring nights when nightingales had sung. And what if, after all, only calamity were to come out of the chest, and he were to lose his last gift of hope! Ah! He knew at last what he would do! He quickly withdrew the key from the lock, stood up straight again, and looked at Zümbül Agha.

"Go down and get Shaban," he ordered, "and don't come back."

The eunuch stared. But if he had anything to say he thought better of uttering it. He saluted silently and went away.

#### IV

The Pasha sat down on the divan and lighted a cigarette. Almost immediately the nightingale stopped singing. For a few moments Zümbül Agha's steps could be heard outside. Then it became very still. The Pasha did not

like it. Look which way he would he could not help seeing the chest—or listening. He got up and went into the big room, where he turned on the water of the fountain. The falling drops made company for him, and kept him from looking for lost reflections. But they presently made him think of what Hélène had said about them. He went out to the porch and sat down on the steps. In front of him the pines lifted their great dark canopies against the stars. Other stars twinkled between the trunks, far below, where the shore lights of the Bosphorus were. It was so still that water sounds came faintly up to him, and every now and then he could even hear nightingales on the European side. Another nightingale began singing in his own woods—the nightingale that had told him what to do, he said to himself. What other things the nightingales had sung to him, years ago! And how long the pines had listened there, still strong and green and rugged and alive, while he, and how many before him, sat under them for a little while and then went away!

Presently he heard steps on the drive and Shaban came, carrying something dark in his hand.

“What is that?” asked the Pasha, as Shaban held it out.

"A pistol, my Pasha. Zümbül Agha told me you wanted it."

The Pasha laughed curtly.

"Zümbül made a mistake. What I want is a shovel, or a couple of them. Can you find such a thing without asking any one?"

"Yes, my Pasha," replied the Albanian promptly, laying the revolver on the steps and disappearing again. And it was not long before he was back with the desired implements.

"We must dig a hole, somewhere, Shaban," said his master in a low voice. "It must be in a place where people are not likely to go, but not too far from the kiosque."

Shaban immediately started toward the trees at the back of the house. The Pasha followed him silently into a path that wound through the wood. A nightingale began to sing again, very near them—*the* nightingale, thought the Pasha.

"He is telling us where to go," he said.

Shaban permitted himself a low laugh.

"I think he is telling his mistress where to go. However, we will go too." And they did, bearing away to one side of the path till they came to the foot of a tall cypress.

"This will do," said the Pasha, "if the roots are not in the way."

Without a word Shaban began to dig. The Pasha took the other spade. To the simple

Albanian it was nothing out of the ordinary. What was extraordinary was that his master was able to keep it up, soft as the loam was under the trees. The most difficult thing about it was that they could not see what they were doing, except by the light of an occasional match. But at last the Pasha judged the ragged excavation of sufficient depth. Then he led the way back to the kiosque.

They found Zümbül Agha in the little room, sitting on the sofa with a pistol in either hand.

"I thought I told you not to come back!" exclaimed the Pasha sternly.

"Yes," faltered the old eunuch, "but I was afraid something might happen to you. So I waited below the pines. And when you went away into the woods with Shaban, I came here to watch." He lifted a revolver significantly. "I found the other one on the steps."

"Very well," said the Pasha at length, more kindly. He even found it in him at that moment to be amused at the picture the black man made, in his sedate frock coat, with his two weapons. And Zümbül Agha found no less to look at, in the appearance of his master's clothes. "But now there is no need for you to watch any longer," added the latter. "If you want to watch, do it at the bottom of the hill. Don't let any one come up here."

"On my head," said the eunuch. He saw that Shaban, as usual, was trusted more than he. But it was not for him to protest against the ingratitude of masters. He salaamed and backed out of the room.

When he was gone the Pasha turned to Shaban:

"This box, Shaban—you see this box? It has become a trouble to us, and I am going to take it out there."

The Albanian nodded gravely. He took hold of one of the handles, to judge the weight of the chest. He lifted his eyebrows.

"Can you help me put it on my back?" he asked.

"Don't try to do that, Shaban. We will carry it together." The Pasha took hold of the other handle. When they got as far as the outer door he let down his end. It was not light. "Wait a minute, Shaban. Let us shut up the kiosque, so that no one will notice anything." He went back to blow out the candles. Then he thought of the fountain. He caught a play of broken images in the pool as he turned off the water. When he had put out the lights and had groped his way to the door he found that Shaban was already gone with the chest. A last drop of water made a strange echo behind him in the dark kiosque. He locked the door and hurried after



Shaban, who had succeeded in getting the chest on his back. Nor would Shaban let the Pasha help him till they came to the edge of the wood. There, carrying the chest between them, they stumbled through the trees to the place that was ready.

"Now we must be careful," said the Pasha. "It might slip or get stuck."

"But are you going to bury the box too?" demanded Shaban, for the first time showing surprise.

"Yes," answered the Pasha. And he added: "It is the box I want to get rid of."

"It is a pity," remarked Shaban regretfully. "It is a very good box. However, you know. Now then!"

There was a scraping and a muffled thud, followed by a fall of earth and small stones on wood. The Pasha wondered if he would hear anything else. But first one and then another nightingale began to fill the night air with their April madness.

"Ah, there are two of them," remarked Shaban. "She will take the one that says the sweetest things to her."

The Pasha's reply was to throw a spadeful of earth on the chest. Shaban joined him with such vigour that the hole was very soon full.

"We are old, my Pasha, but we are good for

something yet," said Shaban. "I will hide the shovels here in the bushes," he added, "and early in the morning I will come again, before any of those lazy gardeners are up, and fix it so that no one will ever know."

There at least was a person of whom one could be sure! The Pasha realized that gratefully, as they walked back through the park. He did not feel like talking, but at least he felt the satisfaction of having done what he had decided to do. He remembered Zümbül Agha as they neared the bottom of the hill. The eunuch had not taken his commission more seriously than it had been given, however, or he preferred not to be seen. Perhaps he wanted to reconnoitre again on top of the hill.

"I don't think I will go in just yet," said the Pasha, as they crossed the bridge into the lower garden. "I am rather dirty. And I would like to rest a little under the chestnut trees. Would you get me an overcoat please, Shaban, and a brush of some kind? And you might bring me a coffee, too."

How tired he was! And what a short time it was, yet what an eternity, since he last dropped into one of those wicker chairs! He felt for his cigarettes. As he did so he discovered something else in his pocket, something small and hard that at first he did not recognize. Then

he remembered the key—the key. . . . He suddenly tossed it into the pool beside him. It made a sharp little splash, which was reëchoed by the dripping basins. He got up and felt in the ivy for the handle that shut off the water. At the end of the garden the Bosphorus lapped softly in the dark. Far away, up in the wood, the nightingales were singing.



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